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TITLE OF THESIS..The Concept of Participation in Paul Tillich's Thought - with studies in its historical background and present significance.

UNIVERSITY.McGill University..........

DEGREE..PhD..........**YEAR GRANTED**...1968..........

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THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION IN PAUL TILLICH'S THOUGHT

ABSTRACT

A. Arnold Wettstein — "The Concept of Participation in Paul Tillich's Thought - with studies in its historical background and present significance."

McGill University
Faculty of Divinity
PhD.

The concept of participation is examined in the major constellations of Tillich's system of thought: ontological, cognitive, symbolic, Christological, pneumatological, historical and eschatological. A study of the use of the concept in the history of Western thought underscores the uniqueness of Tillich's application. Tillich reverses the direction of the relationship: not only does the human participate in the divine, but the divine participates in the human. Nor does Tillich's use of the formula fit the usual categories - substantial and causative. God is the absolute participant. The paradigmatic participation is that of Jesus as the Christ in human existence. The Christian invitation and challenge is to participate in that participation. In participation, the two axiological questions of human life, in Tillich's view, of being and meaning, are answered.

THE CONCEPT OF PARTICIPATION IN PAUL TILLICH'S THOUGHT

- with studies in its historical background
and present significance

A. ARNOLD WETTSTEIN

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
under the Faculty of Divinity
McGill University
1968

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"The element of participation guarantees the unity of a disrupted world..."

--- Paul Tillich

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The guidance and inspiration of three persons, particularly, have been essential to me in the preparation of this dissertation. I want to acknowledge them, however inadequate these words are for the task.

I am very grateful to Professor Joseph C. McLelland for his encouragement and counsel as I began to outline the nature and scope of my thesis. His insights have corrected easy generalizations and directed me back toward the full complexity of issues and historic positions, and his interest has been a continuing support.

To Dean Eric G. Jay I am indebted much more than I can repay. He has called my attention to innumerable difficulties I have experienced in expressing precisely what was on my mind. I am most appreciative of the care with which he read my manuscript and his many suggestions toward clarifying specific points. Of course, the obscurities that remain are mine and not his. I am very grateful to him as well for his cordial welcome and many kindnesses since my arrival at McGill; he has helped make my associations at this University most pleasant and memorable.

Finally, a word of acknowledgement is due to the subject of this dissertation. Since first attending his lectures, taking part in his seminars and listening to his sermons at Union Theological Seminary, I could not help but be filled with admiration and not a little awe before the breadth of Paul Tillich's mind and the depth of his spirit. To me, his interpretations were impressive in their comprehensiveness and insight, his proposals in their creativity and power. His concepts were often startling, and sometimes mystifying, but their pursuit I have found invariably rewarding, whether or not I could always concur. I find them so still.

A.A.W.

Montreal, P.Q.
July, 1968

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ABBREVIATIONS

To avoid unnecessary proliferation of footnotes, the following code has been established, with references to these most frequently-cited works included in the text.

(BR)	Tillich, Paul,	Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955
(CB)	-------------,	The Courage to Be, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1952
(DF)	-------------,	Dynamics of Faith, New York: Harper and Bros., 1957, Harper Torchbook
(FH)	-------------,	Frühe Hauptwerke, Gesammelte Werke, Band I, R. Albrecht (ed.) Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1959
(GW IV)	-------------,	Gesammelte Werke, Band IV, Philosophie und Schicksal, Albrecht (ed.) Stuttgart: E.V., 1961
(GW V)	-------------,	Gesammelte Werke, Band V, Die Frage nach dem Unbedingten, Albrecht (ed.) Stuttgart: E.V., 1964
(IH)	-------------,	The Interpretation of History, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936
(LPJ)	-------------,	Love, Power and Justice, New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1954
(PE)	-------------,	The Protestant Era, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948
(Pers)	-------------,	Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, Carl E. Braaten (ed.) New York: Harper and Row, 1967
(PK)	-------------,	"Participation and Knowledge" in Sociologica: Frankfurter Beiträge zur Sociologie, Band I, T.W. Adorno and W. Dirks (eds.) Frankfort: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955, pp. 201-9
(RET)	-------------,	"The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols" and "The Religious Symbol" in Religious Experience and Truth, Sidney Hook (ed.) New York: New York University Press, 1961, pp. 3-11 and 301-21

(STI)	Tillich, Paul, Systematic Theology, Volume I, Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1951
(STII)	-------------, Systematic Theology, Volume II, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957
(STIII)	-------------, Systematic Theology, Volume III, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963
(TC)	-------------, Theology of Culture, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959

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PROLOGUE

THE QUESTIONS TILLICH LEFT US

The legacy of an important theologian or philosopher may find its significance as much in the questions he reopened as in the answers he has given. In a memorial article, Joseph Haroutunian placed Paul Tillich among those great thinkers who "have a tantalizing way of opening our eyes and making us wonder." He turned our attention to the finitude that is the source of man's grandeur and misery. "To him," Haroutunian points out, "what differentiates man from beasts is that man asks the question of being, which is the question of finitude" - which is "the question Tillich left us."[1] Evaluations of Tillich's place in the contemporary theological scene are largely determined by whether or not the assessor himself asks, as the primal human question, "What does it mean to be?"

The ontological question is not, however, the only means by which Tillich has made us wonder. He has asked if we do not appreciate cultural form until we grasp the religious content, the ultimate concern, within it. He has directed us to observe the manner in which theological statements are always necessarily expressed in philosophical terms which may distort, disfigure or develop them. He has challenged us to re-shape our theological terminology, to question the validity of some terms, substitute others and appreciate the principles by which language and symbols may change. He has pressed us to recognize that time may have the significance of _kairos_ and history the aim of the Kingdom of God. Somehow he has deepened us, drawing us not only into a procedure of thought but into an existential engagement with the realities of life. John

---

[1] Joseph Haroutunian, "The Question Tillich Left Us" in _Paul Tillich: Retrospect and Future_, Nashville; Abingdon Press, 1966, p.51

Dillenberger has written that it is to be expected that Tillich would have left no school or group of disciples; in fact, an attempt to be a disciple would miscarry. A theological system that is one man's home must be another man's prison. Tillich's system is uniquely filled with his philosophical concerns, cultural appreciations and scientific (psychological) interests. His disciples are only "in spirit" - those who come away from the encounter with him "somehow different."[2] Hence, Tillich studies have taken on a special character, always a little self-conscious about looking at something from the outside, but generally imbued with the sense that the body of thought under investigation is dealing seriously and significantly with questions that need confronting. The fact that there is not a Tillichian school but a "circle",

> der es sich zur Aufgabe macht, das Werk Paul Tillichs zu pflegen, zu fördern und mit den Gedanken Tillichs im Gespräch zu bleiben,[3]

reflects the general tenor of those studies.

1. The State of Tillich Studies

While Tillich's work from the beginning has called forth both appreciative and critical reactions, the first stage of "Tillich studies" did not properly begin until the publication of the first volume of his Systematic Theology in 1951 and the compendium of articles about his views edited by Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall in the following year.[4]

---

[2] John Dillenberger, "Paul Tillich: Theologian of Culture", ibid. p.41

[3] Prospectus on Paul Tillich, Evangelisches Verlagswerk, Stuttgart,1968,p.25

[4] C.W. Kegley and R.W. Bretall (eds.) The Theology of Paul Tillich, New York: Macmillan, 1952

Previously, Karl Barth, Emmanuel Hirsch and others had taken issue with aspects of his thought, as he had with theirs,[5] but only after the main outlines of Tillich's position had begun to be clear were careful studies made of its facets. That many of these were most affirmative needs little documentation. J.H. Randall, Jr. called Tillich "not only the ablest Protestant theologian of the present day, but also by far the most persuasive exponent of the philosophy of existentialism"[6] while Walter Leibrecht claimed that Tillich "has spoken to modern man with a penetration which is perhaps unequalled by any other man of thought."[7] This side of Tillich studies has continued into the present as J.A.T. Robinson's "tracts for the times" focus attention on aspects of Tillich's thought as he maintains that Tillich has served our generation significantly in demonstrating "that the Biblical faith in the reality of God can be stated in all its majesty and mystery, both of transcendence and immanence, without dependence on the supranaturalist scheme."[8]

From the beginning, however, it became clear that some of the most crucial characteristics of Tillich's theology afforded others great difficulty. Karl Barth, believing that no "systematic" theology can be allowed for it must be the work of man and not God, has long felt "a holy respect for a good philosopher - and I admire my friend Paul Tillich", and then goes on to say, "But I do not think he is writing Christian theology."[9] Reinhold Niebuhr called attention to the danger of ontological speculations "which subject either God or man to an ontological necessity" and thereby falsify the drama of which the Bible speaks.[10] John Bennett had the same reservation, that Tillich "surrounds the Christian revelation with an ontology which seems...to dominate the revelation and distort it."[11] Dietrich Bonhoeffer felt that Tillich "does not advance beyond the speculative" by attempting to define the Protestant message without reference to sin as the Grenzsituation and the message of grace and forgiveness as its answer. In his estimate, Tillich's ontological emphases empty the message of its religious contents.[12] Tillich had come under attack early by Emil Brunner for his concept of the Unconditioned, which in the latter's view betrayed a Gnosticism which denied the personality of God.* Through the years Nels Ferré, while maintaining his deep admiration for Tillich as a person, has been troubled by this same point, believing that Tillich's reservations about a personal God undermine prayer and worship as well as faith, to the point where he calls it a "lingering naïveté that sees him basically as a Christian."[13] The closest and most thorough student of Tillich's work, James Luther Adams, makes a similar criticism:

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[5] David Hopper surveys these debates in Tillich: a Theological Portrait, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968, pp.35-100

[6] J.H. Randall, Jr.,"The Ontology of Paul Tillich" in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit. p. 161

[7] W. Leibrecht, "The Life and Mind of Paul Tillich" in Religion and Culture: Essays in Honour of Paul Tillich, London: SCM, 1959, p.3

[8] J.A.T. Robinson, "The Debate Continues" in D.L. Edwards (ed.) The Honest to God Debate, London; SCM, 1963, p.259

[9] Karl Barth, Karl Barth's Table Talk, John D. Godsey (ed.) Richmond: John KnoxxPress, 1963, p. 29

> ...because Tillich has been so prone to show that God is not an Object or a Supreme Being...he has inadequately dealt with the question of the character of God.[14]

Full-length appraisals of aspects of Tillich's theology comprise another stage of Tillich study. The reservation about the systematic nature of Tillich's thinking expressed by David Roberts[15] was expanded by Kenneth Hamilton who insisted on a distinction between "systematic thinking" and "thinking in a system", holding that the insight and power of the Gospel cannot be contained within a system's boundaries. Constructing his critique on a Kierkegaardian foundation, that a System has no room for a Self, Hamilton contended that Tillich's theology has no place for the individual.[16]

---

[10] R. Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation in Tillich's Theology", in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit. p. 217

[11] J. Bennett, "A Protestant View of Authority in the Church", Theological Digest, v.11, 1963, p. 212

[12] D. Bonhoeffer, Act and Being, trans. B. Noble, London:Collins,1962,p.87n

[13] Nels Ferré, "Tillich and the Nature of Transcendence" in Paul Tillich: Retrospect and Future, op. cit. p.7

[14] J.L. Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion; New York: Harper and Row, 1965, p.270

* Brunner, H. Emil The Philosophy of Religion A. Farrer and B.L. Wolf (trans.) London: Nicholson and Watson, 1937, p. 42

A companion volume, by J. Heywood Thomas, attacked the philosophical side of Tillich's work from the perspective of a philosophical empiricism he believed Tillich never understood. Taking on the role of Tillich's "logical critic", Thomas believed the fundamental concept of being in the Systematic Theology is confused and that Tillich misunderstands philosophy as a subject rather than a method.[17] Meanwhile, Fr. George Tavard had taken the measure of Tillich's Christology, finding it defective in its rejection of the Chalcedonian two-nature formula.[18] R. Allan Killen had extensively examined Tillich's ontology, concluding that it is incompatible with the Protestant message.[19]

Tillich's anthropology has been investigated and criticized by Bernard Martin. Troubled by Tillich's insistence on the transcendental nature of the Fall and by what appears to him as a loss of the historical

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[15] D. Roberts, "Tillich's Doctrine of Man", in Kegley-Bretall, op.cit., p.130

[16] K. Hamilton, The System and the Gospel, London: SCM, 1963, p.139ff, pp.174-196, 224-5

[17] J.H. Thomas, Paul Tillich: An Appraisal, London: SCM, 1963, pp.36-7

[18] G.H. Tavard, Paul Tillich and the Christian Message, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962

[19] R.A. Killen, The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich, Kampen, the Netherlands: J.H. Kok, 1956

Jesus, Martin is even more disturbed by what he takes to be Tillich's actual method, erecting an ontology on the basis of man's existential anxiety and then letting it dominate the answers as well as the questions. Tillich's "entire commological view is colored by his acceptance of anxiety as man's fundamental psychic experience..."[20] Thus, Tillich has been charged with allowing the demands of a systematic ontology, on the one hand, and the claims of existential experience, on the other, to disfigure his thought.

Another aspect of Tillich studies has developed, overlapping this last stage. As the full system unfolded in the second and third volumes of the Systematic Theology, a number of surveys appeared to aid in introducing readers to the key concepts and overall scheme of Tillich's work. Alexander McKelway has done this from a Barthian perspective, as has Josef Schmitz from a Roman Catholic one.[21] Guyton B. Hammond has summarized the system in popular form, building around the principle of "self-transcendence."[22] Describing The Vision of Paul Tillich as centering on "theonomy", Carl J. Armbruster outlined the system in relation to Tillich's philosophy of culture.[23] Each of these volumes includes a number of critical comments on such points as Tillich's concept of non-being as empirically unverifiable, his symbol theory as inadequate in distinguishing true from less-true symbols, his ontology as dealing unjustly with the natural-supernatural scheme. But these works are descriptive rather than critical in intent. David H. Kelsey's book on The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology is somewhat similar, as he seeks to trace the biblical, philosophical and existential strands through the warp and woof of the system.[24]

---

[20] B. Martin, Paul Tillich's Doctrine of Man, London: Nesbit, 1966, p.111

[21] McKelway, A. The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964

J. Schmitz, Die Apologetische Theologie Paul Tillichs, Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald, 1966

[22] G.B. Hammond, The Power of Self-Transcendence, St.Louis: Bethany, 1966

[23] C.J. Armbruster, The Vision of Paul Tillich, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967

Recently, another aspect of study has taken a place in the overall spectrum. Historical analyses have examined the way Tillich's perspectives have been shaped by those thinkers he has taken most seriously. Frank W. White's dissertation is on Schleiermacher and Tillich, Fr. Daniel O'Hanlon's on Schelling's influence. James Luther Adams has produced a comprehensive study of the historical development of Tillich's early period until 1945. David Hopper, developing a Theological Portrait, has described what he views as important moments in Tillich's theological growth. He demonstrates such points as a new awareness of the distinctiveness of Christian revelation in the controversy with Hirsch, and a gradual movement away from emphasis on the *kairos* toward a more pervasive individualism.[25]

In view of this broad scope of Tillich studies, what is needed now? What is to be done next? Surely, we have adequate surveys and condensations. While additional historical investigations may well be made, we have enough material at hand to understand Tillich in relation to the major traditions in which he stands. Critical studies have been completed on most of the basic doctrines and themes of Tillich's thought: ontological, philosophical, Christological, etc. Now it appears that some new ventures may be undertaken. Some of Tillich's major concepts can be applied in the study of the world religions. Candidates for such application would be his concepts of religion, ultimate concern, myth and symbol, and the character of Spirit. Tillich's own intention was to move in this direction, as his last public lecture indicates.[26]

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[24] D.H. Kelsey, The Fabric of Tillich's Theology, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967

[25] J.L. Adams, op. cit. and D. Hopper, op. cit.

Another series of endeavors could be an expansion of Tillich's own attempts to correlate his own formulations with the principles that are operative in other disciplines, such as art, psycho-analysis, or particular schools of philosophy. Guyton B. Hammond's study of the concept of estrangement in Tillich and Eric Fromm is an example.[27]

But before concentrations of these projections of Tillich's thought change the emphasis of Tillich studies, additional work needs to be done within his thought itself. The study of concepts that disclose the actual inner dynamics of Tillich's system is a necessary prerequisite to the full exploration into relating his thought to new issues. Does Tillich's style of theologizing contain an inner cohesiveness? Are there principles within it that bring the various strands of his thought into an actual and necessary inter-relationship? These questions require answers, for it is not enough to speak relevantly to new issues if that simply means speaking the language they demand. If relevance is to be more real than apparent, a structure of thought must have the capability of drawing those issues into a larger sphere of meaning which has both consistency and flexibility enough to allow for the appropriate contributions of valid, new views while relating them to the total endeavor of man's understanding his world. Without cohesiveness, an apparent relevance would have little value. What is called for now in Tillich studies is the analysis of concepts that would reveal the dynamics and the dimensions of Tillich's theology - ontological, philosophical, existential-phenomenological and biblical - from the inside, in their interaction. The purpose would be to determine whether such an interacting has the coherence to make of it a valid approach for theologizing further on the questions Tillich left us.

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[26] Paul Tillich, The Future of Religions, Jerald C. Brauer (ed.), New York: Harper and Row, 1966, pp.80-94; cf. article by Mircea Eliade, p.31-6

[27] G.B. Hammond, Man in Estrangement: Paul Tillich and Eric Fromm, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1965

2. Contention and Plan

My contention is that the concept of *participation* represents the cohesiveness of Tillich's theological system in a unique way. My plan is to examine it in its various contexts analytically, with historical references to clarify its meanings.

At every major turning-point of Tillich's thought we meet participation. In unfolding his understanding of being and Being-itself, he maintains that "everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity." (ST I,237) The ontological reference is but one of many for the concept. Tillich has recognized its centrality in the whole constellation of his ideas:

> A symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes; the knower participates in the known; the lover participates in the beloved; the existent participates in the essences which make it what it is, under the condition of existence; the individual participates in the destiny of separation and guilt; the Christian participates in the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus the Christ. (ST I, 177)

The individual participates in his environment, in history, and can participate "in the transcendent union of unambiguous life" (ST III, 140) while the church, or rather, the Spiritual Community can be called holy in view of its "participating through faith in the holiness of the Divine Life." (ST III, 155) The concept is a key one by virtue of its ubiquity in Tillich's thought.

Participation is a key concept in a more important way, however: the concept is relational. To maintain that a being participates in something is to speak of a decisive relationship. Now Tillich's entire system is relational. He thinks systematically because his purpose is to relate issues and answers to each other. His method is one of correlation and his efforts are constantly to relate philosophy and theology, ontological structures and biblical awareness, the individual and his world, the church and secular movements, history and its end, man and God. We can expect an important relational term to provide an entrance into the inner dynamics of a relational system of thought and a perspective from which to evaluate its cohesiveness.

Additionally, we shall see as we proceed what is far from obvious now, that participation is a key concept by virtue of the doors it will unlock. Through the study of this concept, we shall see more clearly the axiological principles of Tillich's thought on the basis of which a fresh interpretation of Tillich's doctrine of God, a deepened appreciation of the significance of Christology for his system, and a keener awareness of the central role of his symbol theory will result.

While it is clear to the most casual reader of Tillich that all sections of his system share the term participation, it will become clearer to us that in the participation-relationship the strands of Tillich's thought, ontological, philosophical, existential and biblical actually cohere.

3. Participation: the Concept of a Concept

Considering the frequency with which the term is used in Tillich's writings as well as its centrality, we must find it curious that participation has not received more critical attention. Sometimes, it is actually ignored. Fr. Gustave Weigel, for example, completely overlooked the term in an article and concluded that Tillich's theology is "an acosmic pantheism touchingly expressed in terms of misery and hope."[28] Had he considered this concept carefully, with its dual emphases of difference and identity, he would have seen that something other than pantheism was involved and would not have made the serious error of maintaining that Tillich identifies being and existence, a fact which Tillich pointed out in his response.[29]

George F. McLean, another Roman Catholic assessor of Tillich's work, does not make the same error. He notes the important place participation has in Tillich's thought, appreciating its provision of a basis in reality for relationship with God by giving expression to the divine presence. "No religion can be without this without being reduced to a secular movement of political, educational or scientific activism."[30] McLean believes the term points to the reality of a religious relationship essential for any vitally religious movement. He sees Tillich maintaining that one of the challenges of contemporary Protestantism before the emptiness of theological abstractions and moralistic platitudes is to "restore the element of participation in the divine."[31]

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[28] in O'Meara, J.A. and Weisser, C.D. (eds.) Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, Dubuque: Priory Press, 1964, p. 18

[29] Ibid. p.23

[30] Ibid. p.48

But McLean has his reservations about Tillich's development of the concept. In his view, Tillich's participation is basically pantheistic. He tries to recover what Luther rejected under the influence of the Erfurt nominalists, but in making God the depth dimension of men he lets the "element of pantheism" take control. The consequence is that Tillich must then posit individualization as a counterforce, and in the process the real individuality of both God and man is lost.[32] In the midst of meaninglessness, Tillich stresses a depth dimension which is really only subjectivity: "unfortunately, his solution seeks this participation from within..."[33]

Much of the force of McLean's criticisms disappears because the two objections he raises cancel each other out. The "depth dimension" cannot be merely subjective if the comprehensive setting is pantheism. McLean does, however, call for a different kind of participation, in God as a separate entity, supernatural if you will, which is a matter that will require careful attention. Schmitz makes much the same demand. Tillich's attempt to correct the reduction of God to the status of partnership in a personalist I-Thou encounter has become overcorrective. The participation concept in Tillich, as Schmitz views it, does not allow for a real separation of persons or things, so that Creation, the Fall and

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[31] Ibid. p.51
[32] Ibid. p.82
[33] Ibid. p.84

Redemption are but Moments in the Divine Life.[34] Tillich should have held to a causal interpretation of participation, and a supernatural God, as in the Thomist tradition.

The pantheistic charge is made in a slightly different connection by Arnold Come, who claims that when Tillich says that "man participates in all levels of life, but he participates fully only in that level of life which he himself is - he has communion only with persons", he is asserting that participation "does not truly express the unique quality of interpersonal relationship, but...an additional word must be used,...'communion.'"[35] Since Tillich is so anxious to avoid speaking of God as a person, Come insists, he allows the relationship of participation to absorb that of personal communion. Man participates in the divine, rather than having communion with God.

W.F. Zuurdeeg makes the pantheist charge in still a different context and with another concern. To him, Tillich's use of the participation concept is arbitrary, a contention he seeks to support with a rather elaborate argument. The term, according to Zuurdeeg, has its source in Lévy-Bruhl. Participation and objectification stand in contrast to one another. Tillich might more cogently have added individualization as a third human attitude rather than speak of the ontological polarity between the two tendencies, participation and individualization. He did not find this course possible because of Hegel's influence upon his thinking, which required that one of the three terms be left out in order to maintain a bi-polar structure.

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[34] J. Schmitz, op. cit. p. 276f

[35] Arnold Come, Human Spirit and Holy Spirit, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959, p. 166 The quotation from Tillich is from ST I, 176. cf. Come, pp.121-2

Unfortunately, the thrust of this argument is lost in the initial premise. As we shall see, Tillich's theory of symbols has a suggestive parallel to Lévy-Bruhl's, but this is not the only source of the concept for him. The participation concept presents itself in the dialogues of Plato, the ontology of Thomas Aquinas and the theological and cultural analyses of Schleiermacher, with all of whom Tillich was intimately familiar. The dimension of Zuurdeeg's critique that is significant, however, is his assertion that, as the parallel with Lévy-Bruhl suggests, Tillich's ontology "is a rebirth of primitive religion" in which God or the gods were identical with the cosmos and along with man participated in each other.[36] We shall need to examine this possible connection of Tillich's views with mankind's primeval religious experiences, although we need not therefore accept Zuurdeeg's reductionist implication that those views are to be discounted. After all, the term "primitive", along with "myth", must be ambivalent. These terms may refer to the pre-scientific or to that perennial pre-logical sub-stratum of awareness, the "primitive postulates" that are deeper than logical expression.

The most careful analysis of Tillich's use of participation has been worked out by Lewis S. Ford. Ford finds five kinds of participation discussed in the system:

1) causal participation, as an effect participates in its cause in the Thomist system;

2) inclusive participation, as man participates in the subhuman realm of physical, chemical and biological levels

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[36] W.F. Zuurdeeg, An Analytical Philosophy of Religion, Nashville: Abingdon, 1958, pp.160-1

within him and God participates in existing realities;

3) receptive participation, which is an openness or sensitivity toward that in which one participates, as a knower participates in the known, a lover in the beloved;

4) environmental participation, referring to the individual's relatedness to all that surrounds him, or symbols being "imbedded in particular contexts and webs of meaning";

5) essential participation, that is, the relation of the particular to the universal as in the Platonic cosmology.

As Ford examines the concept in Tillich's theory of symbols, he maintains that the apparent cogency of the argument rests on a "silent transition" from environmental to essential participation. Ford finds this a confusion of distinctive meanings that is dangerously misleading.[37] We shall need to determine if Ford's suggested typology will stand and to discover, in examining the symbol-theory, whether Ford validly points to an unwarranted transition. Actually, we shall be testing the opposing hypothesis, in view of the nature of this investigation, from the inside: that Tillich's use of participation is remarkably consistent in the development of its meaning, which is not comprehended by any of Ford's types. The contention based on this hypothesis will be that the complexity of the concept lends an air of apparent cogency to Ford's argument, but the inner consistency of its meaning refutes it.

To summarize the basic issues as these writers have elaborated them: we shall need to inquire whether Tillich's ontology of participation is basically pantheistic and thereby alien to the biblical faith and message, whether it is an anachronism, a hold-over of a primitive religious mentality that must be outgrown, and whether its structure as a concept is confused and misleading. In the course of this inquiry, we shall be examining the converse assertions, that in participation we can observe the correlative manner in which biblical faith and philosophic thought enrich each other, fulfilling mutual potentialities of understanding; that participation, analogous to "primitive" religious experience, points to a basic kind of relationship with persons, objects and the divine that we need to recover; and that the concept is one which can be properly defined in Tillich's usage and appropriated as a valuable constituent of theological thought.

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[37] Lewis S. Ford, "The Three Strands of Tillich's Theory of Religious Symbols", in Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966, pp.104-30

Tillich himself gives us some but not a great deal of direct help. In the two places in his writings where he offers a definition, his treatment is too brief to be adequate for all the contexts in which the term is found. In the setting of epistemological discussion, he writes:

> Participation literally means "taking part", but there is an ambiguity in the meaning of the word. It can mean "sharing", as in having shares in an enterprise, or it can mean "having in common", in the sense of the Platonic methexis of the individual in the universal, or it can mean "becoming a part", as of a political movement. In all three cases participation points to an element of identity in that which is different or of a togetherness of that which is separated.[38]

The other definition Tillich offers, as we shall see,* closely parallels this one.

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[38] Paul Tillich, "Participation in Knowledge: Problems of an Ontology of Cognition" in Sociologica: Frankfurter Beiträge zur Sociologie, Band 1, herausgegeben von T.W. Adorno and Walter Dirks, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955, p. 201

* p. 71 below

We must notice carefully that Tillich recognizes an ambiguity in the word. An ambiguity is similar to a mystery. On the one hand, if one "explains" a mystery, it is no longer mysterious. On the other hand, truly to "reveal" a mystery must be to conceal it, to preserve its mysterious character. Likewise, with an ambiguity: to clarify an ambiguity in a concept would be to demonstrate its multi-dimensional nature and thus to dissolve the ambiguity. On the other hand, to point to a real ambiguity is to retain it, to insist that no one aspect of the term adequately includes its totality of meaning, that one denotation is not complete in itself but requires the other connotations to convey its full significance. Tillich clearly conceives the ambiguity of participation in this second way, as a pregnant ambiguity. We must question whether this is legitimate.

Yet even with its ambiguity, the definition Tillich unfolds here will apparently be unable to include the meaning of finite beings participating in Being-itself, or the other ontological referrents of the term. The definition leaves too many important questions unanswered. Does participation mean a substantial sharing? Is power imparted in the participation-relationship? Are forms imposed or attributes received? By speaking of sharing in an "enterprise" he indicates a dynamic and open character of ontological realities in their participating, but not very clearly.

Tillich does, however, point to two basic elements of participation here that stand behind its ambiguities and appear to have a relevance for the ontological and other settings of the term - the element of identity and the situation of being separated. Yet surely the term must point to more than these.

We should note that the adequacy of Ford's typology is already in question in view of the third kind of participation Tillich mentions here: "becoming a part" of something, like a political party. A conscious decision and activity are required for this which Ford's category of "receptive participation" can hardly include. However, the definition indicates no recognition of the possible difficulty to which Ford calls our attention, that the types of participation suggested, sharing in an enterprise, and Platonic methexis, for example, may not really be compatible with each other. Even an ambiguous term requires an inner continuity of meaning.

In examining participation, we are dealing with a concept some interpreters of Tillich have ignored and others have attacked. Tillich himself has not dealt, in any one place, with its full complexity. Combined with the crucial role the concept plays in the diverse sections of Tillich's system of thought, these considerations underscore the necessity of a thorough investigation.

Before we proceed to Tillich's system itself, however, we would do well to trace the major moments in the history of this concept through the course of Western thought. One reason for doing this is suggested by Tillich's reference in his definition to Platonic methexis. Tillich is conscious of the historical development of the terms he uses. The second reason is that misconstructions of Tillich's meaning may be based on the assumption that a meaning fixed in a particular historical era is normative, when actually Tillich has revalued the concept. This is, in fact, the case with participation. We can appreciate the uniqueness of Tillich's application only against the background of the history of the idea.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA

Tillich has told of being asked once by a fundamentalist minister, "Why do we need philosophy when we possess all truth through revelation?" The theologian's comment was that the man did not realize that in the words he used, "truth" and "revelation", "he was determined by a long history of philosophical thought which gave these words the meaning in which he used them."[1] The participation concept has such a long history, with earliest origins in the pre-Socratic medical writers and a real beginning as a concept of major importance in the Platonic dialogues. It bore a new emphasis in the thought of Plotinus, reached a climax in the Summa of Thomas Aquinas and experienced a renewal in the theology of Schleiermacher before its appropriation by Tillich. The meanings philosophical thought has given it have not always been self-evident.

1. The Beginning in Plato

The pursuit of a concept through the Platonic writings is soon entangled in hermeneutical circles every bit as perplexing as those which bedevil biblical interpretation. The participation term is to be understood in the context of the theory of Ideas which is the crux of controversy among interpreters of Plato. Was it Plato's purpose to remold the questioning Socratic spirit into a rigid ontological scheme? Or was he, in the Socratic tradition, primarily committed to dialectics? Or, as the Neo-Platonic school came to believe, was he ultimately a mystic who, as shown in the Seventh Letter, believed that truth was neither to be systematized nor defined but apprehended in a flash of illumination? Fortunately, we need not, for our purpose, become immersed in these issues, except to question the suggestion that Plato was consciously building a system. Were the Athenian master's intention to develop a systematic world-scheme, he would hardly have chosen dialogues rather than discourses to set it forth, and the participation concept would hardly have had the complexity that came to characterize it.

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[1] Paul Tillich, BR, 10

Aristotle claimed that Plato never really understood what he meant by participation. To speak of things participating in Ideas was to him "to use empty words and poetical metaphors."[2] Actually, Plato took some pains to attempt to explicate what it meant that entities in the two orders of reality had this kind of relationship with each other.

Plato's terms, eidos and idea, are both derived from idein, to see, and denote what Ritter calls "die augenfällige Äusserlichkeit" of a thing or "its looks."[3] The words came to mean that which gives a thing its shape or character, the distinctive quality of an object or state. As abstract thought developed, the terms came to be applied to non-sensible properties or patterns. Plato believed that Ideas or Forms were real, though their reality was of a different order from observable phenomena. He sought to determine where they could be located in time and space and distinguished them from the world of things. (Phaedo and the Republic)

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[2] Aristotle, Metaphysics, 991^{a}21, Richard McKeon (ed.) The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York; Random House, 1941, p.708

[3] in H.C. Baldry, "Plato's 'Technical Terms'", The Classical Quarterly, v.31, p. 141f. Werner Jaeger is impressed by the frequency of the phrases "looking at something", "with one's eye fixed on something" in Plato, which phrases "vividly evoke what he means by eidos and idea." The words were used by medical writers to describe the common form or appearance of a number of types of disease. Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, London: Oxford, 1944, v. II, p. 162

Methexis was the primary term Plato used for describing the relationship of Ideas to sensible objects and states. The word, meaning to partake of, is itself a composite of meta and echo, to have, hold or possess in common. Other words used in a similar way are koinoneo, to have a share of, and parousia, being present in or with a thing. The fifth century (B.C.) philosophers and medical writers used these terms for relationships in which properties were shared substantially. They did not distinguish between substances and attributes but, as H.C. Baldry puts it, "vaguely regarded qualities as 'things'." A patient's fever shares in or partakes of to thermon, the hot, in the Hippocratic writings. In the Helena of Isocrates, dated about 390 B.C., metecho can express a partaking of non-sensible qualities, like wisdom and justice. These usages provided the material from which Plato fashioned his concepts. One other word used for the relationship of things to Ideas, mimesis, imitation or likening, has been taken to imply a more abstract connection. However, the earlier sense of this word was "embodying" or "representing", as an actor impersonates a character in a play.

Using these concepts, Plato set out to deal with the problems that concerned him. In the Laches, the questioning Socrates seeks "a common quality" of courage that is the same in the courageousness of soldiers in battle, sailors at sea, persons in poverty and pain (191e-192b), while in the Euthyphro his concern is for a definition of piety and impiety. The Gorgias develops a theme of order, maintaining that "that which makes a thing good is the proper order inhering in each thing" (506e), and in the Euthydemus Socrates speaks of beautiful things being not the same as "absolute beauty but they have beauty present with each of them." (301a)

In the Gorgias, Plato uses metechein for the first time. Socrates speaks here of neutral actions such as sitting, walking, running, sailing, or objects such as wood, or stones, that are not inherently good or evil but "which partake sometimes of the nature of good and at other times of evil, or of neither." (477e) This participation is receptive and does not require that what is received must be necessarily or intrinsically a part of the subject's nature. A contrasting subject in the Meno, however, brings out another meaning of the term. Meno protests that virtue could not be the same in man and in woman, whose sociological functions are so different. Socrates responds by pressing the question: are not temperance and justice required in both the male function, of ordering the state, and the female function, of ordering the house? If men, women, children and youth are to be good "then all men are good in the same way, and by participation in the same virtues." (73b) This ethical context calls for more than a passive partaking: participation here is the consequence of ethical decision and action.

In Socrates' purported last conversation with his closest friends in the Phaedo, the Ideas are described as the unseen realities related to objects as souls are to bodies. Just as souls may be withdrawn in themselves in purity and immortality (79d) or as in this life, mixed with body, impure, tainted by passions and desires (67a), so Ideas can exist in a pure state (80d) or as embodied, "present" in things. "Nothing makes a thing beautiful", says Socrates, "but the presence and participation of beauty in whatever way or manner obtained;...by beauty all beautiful things become beautiful." (100d)

In this context, participation involves the imparting of a quality into that which can receive it. As to the "manner", Socrates admits, "I am uncertain" but of the fact of the convergence of realities of two orders in a sharing between them, he is convinced.

In this dialogue, Plato develops a causal participation theory. As a thing becomes beautiful by participation in Beauty, so "the only cause of two is participation in duality" and "there is no way in which anything comes into existence except by participation in its own proper essence" or nature. (101c) The Ideas comprise the real nature of things.

These strands in the participation concept are elaborated more in the Republic. The man who lives fully awake and not in a dream, can distinguish the Idea from the objects which participate in it. (476d) A basic theme of the dialogue is that the just man knows justice by becoming just, that is, by a just ordering of his own life. There is a kinship between the knower and the known. Clearly in this dialogue, that which is known, the Idea, has the higher reality, above those objects through which we can know it. Particulars are seen as "tossing about" between being and not-being. Only the Ideas are real, which find their illumination and the ground of their being in the Good. Justice or any other virtue is known in the light of something greater than itself, the Idea of the Good "which is beyond existence in dignity and power." (509b) All the Ideas are reflections of the Good, since they are types of excellence. In the famous allegory of the cave in Book VII, Plato dramatizes the conviction that sensible objects are the passing shadows of the real.

Just when the theory of Ideas and the modes of participation in them seem most fully developed, Plato suddenly calls them all into question in the most perplexing and notoriously difficult dialogue, the Parmenides. Objections are raised to Plato's most cherished convictions, without apparent refutation. The criticisms of Parmenides in the dialogue seem to reflect discussion within the Academy. Socrates is disturbed about such difficulties as whether there is an Idea of hair, mud and dirt and troubled about the manner of partaking: "Really, it seems no easy matter to determine in any way." (131e) The significance of the dialogue may be that Plato here asserts that while all the problems involved in the theory were not resolved, in time they can be worked out. That might be the meaning when the old philosopher tells the young Socrates that his difficulty is that he lacks "sufficient previous training" and that when philosophy would have a firmer grasp on him, he would see things more clearly. (135d)

Parmenides' first objection is based on the absurdity of regarding a particular as possessing a part or the whole of an Idea. He asks whether "Each thing that partakes receives as its share either the Form as a whole or a part of it? Or can there be any other way of partaking besides this?" (131a) Parmenides develops an argument of ridicule in terms of Largeness and Smallness, supposing that one has a part of the Small, and would need to have a larger portion of the Small to be smaller than the Large! The argument would hold with any set of opposites of degree, such as light and dark or hot and cold. Cornford maintains that one of the earliest ways of misinterpreting the Ideas is reflected here. Eudoxus conceived participation in such a material way: Forms were bodies, divisible, in mixture in things. Clearly, this is not Plato's view in the Phaedo or Republic. This first objection is valid only for those who can think in none but spatial and substantial terms. Later in the dialogue, Parmenides takes an entirely different approach to the Ideas of Smallness and Greatness, insisting they are not such that they can be in anything in a substantial way. (149dff.)

The second objection of Parmenides, an argument of infinite progression, need not concern us, involving as it does only the Ideas, claiming that any new act of greatness must revise the Idea of greatness. Socrates responds by saying that perhaps the Ideas are simply in the mind, to which Parmenides offers a third objection which does concern us: in that case one could only say that things participate in Ideas if he would maintain that things think! Here is another misinterpretation of the Ideas. Never are they, for Plato, simply definitions or logical universals. In all of the dialogues, the Ideas have an ontological reality. They are in the structure of things. The mental processes of definition and comparison simply formulate an understanding of what is already there.

Socrates counters with another proposal, that "what is meant by the participation of other things in the ideas, is really imitation of them." (132d) This provides the setting for Parmenides' fourth objection, the argument of infinite regress. If the Idea and a particular stand in the relationship of likeness to each other, we must posit another Idea, of which both partake, in order to explain the likeness, and hence a fourth, relating the particular to the likening idea, ad infinitum. David Ross finds this argument sound and claims Plato does not refute it. However, Plato did continue to use the theory. Taylor and Cornford show that Plato was aware of the infinite regress argument in the Republic (597c) where Socrates apeaks of the Idea of bed, insisting there can be only one ideal.

Taylor goes on to indicate the fallacy in Parmenides' argument by recalling the view of Proclus that a copy, homoioma, was related to the original, paradeigma, not only as a resemblance but also as a derivation. Model and copy are not equal partners in the relationship; participation involves the primacy of the Idea, its ultimacy and ideality.

In Taylor's view, the gravest objection to the two worlds of Socrates is presented last by Parmenides - that such dualism leads to complete skepticism. (133a-135c) Our existence in a world of shadows can only offer partial knowledge: "we are precluded from knowing what real good is..."[4] But if we could hear directly from Plato himself, we could expect that the author of the Divided Line passage of the Republic would say that though our senses only report shadows, we know they are shadows. The skepticism is directed toward the senses, not the mind of man.

The next curious step in the dialogue seems to undermine all the objections Parmenides has made, as he tells Socrates that his difficulties simply show the need of more schooling in logic. Parmenides is then persuaded to demonstrate his logical method, which comprises the remainder of the conversation. But most curiously, one of the primary principles of that method was completely neglected in the treatment of the Ideas and the problem of participation: that is, the consideration of the opposite of the original thesis. They did not weigh whether the denial of the participation theory might not involve even worse difficulties and leave many of life's experiences and perceptions unexplained.

Cornford believes that some of the later passages in the dialogue are decisive in evaluating Plato's own position. By refuting Zeno's maxim that what is one cannot also be many, Parmenides is reflecting on his earlier argument against participation. (145) He affirms here that "a 'One which is' is both one and many, whole and parts." It is One and it is. What is more, many things are One. Cornford writes:

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[4] A.E. Taylor, Plato: The Man and His Work, 2nd. ed. New York: Dial, 1927, p.358

> Unity must be somehow divided and distributed among many things;...the mere assertion of a One Being at once implies that there are many beings, each of which is one or partakes of Unity.[5]

Participation as an unavoidable fact is the premise of much of the argument. As Parmenides speaks of the Unlimited, he establishes how things partake. (158e-259b) Cornford summarizes the trend in the dialogue: "the unity (entities) have is not the whole or a part of the Form, Unity itself, but an element of Limit imposed upon an unlimited nature, which, conceived in abstraction, would be bare multitude without any sort of unity."[6] Each object or instance partakes of Unity or Singularity or it would not be what it is. This factor of its reality is shared with every other object or instance, as every man shares the fact of individuality with every other. For Plato, participation was not a term dealing only with a logical relationship; it had a causal significance, describing a factor in the shaping and forming of the very nature of things.

Interpreters differ as widely about the meaning of the Parmenides as they do about the whole of Plato's philosophy. Vanhoutte judges that "when the Parmenides comes to question seriously the nature of participation itself, everything tumbles in."[7] Ross believes that participation is an ultimately indefinable metaphor.[8] Cornford seems the soundest when he decides that "it is naive to conclude that Plato himself regarded the objections as seriously damaging his theory, although the nature of participation is obscure and hard for our imaginations to conceive."[9] Nevertheless, he believes that we can say some things about participation in the Parmenides in a general way: 1) it is not to be understood in a gross, material sense; 2) a Form has an independent existence, not just in the mind - participation is not simply an intellective process; 3) individual instances stand in a relation to the Form analogous to that of a copy to an original, which includes the relation of likeness but is not confined to it.

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[5] F.M. Cornford, Plato and Parmenides, London: Routledge, 1958, p. 146

[6] Ibid. p. 212-3

[7] Maurice Vanhoutte, La Methode Ontologique de Platon, Louvain and Paris: Nauwelaerts, 1956, p. 39

Significantly, the theory of Ideas is not abandoned by Plato in his later dialogues. The Ideas as patterns find an important place in the cosmology of the Timaeus. And in the Sophist participation is found in an interesting ontological setting. The Stranger is establishing the position that not everything that is, is visible, nor is the distinction between the visible and the invisible so great as to leave an unbridgeable gulf. While all things do not have communion with all other things, (which had been the view of Anaxagoras), surely "some things communicate with some things." (252d) Reflecting the Divided Line image, he considers the ontological status of truth and falsehood, deciding that there could be no falsehood unless language, opinion and imagination "partake of not-being." (260e) The principle is set forth that things that are partake of being and that even not-being is a form of being. (258d)

What are we then to conclude concerning Plato's concept of participation? Surely, the dialogues offer more specific content for the term than Aristotle would have us believe. Nevertheless, his charge that it is a poetic concept cannot be altogether denied.

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[8] David Ross, Plato's Theory of Ideas, Oxford: Clarendon, 1951,p.231, cf. p.89

[9] F.M. Cornford, op. cit. p. 95

Participation for Plato expressed the intimacy of the relationship between things, states and phenomena of the world of the senses and the world of Ideas. The term indicates that there are points of identity in spite of the separation between things and Ideas and among things themselves. Further, participation underscores the primacy of the Ideas and the derived nature of the objective world. Things gain their reality from the Ideas. Though not in a crude, substantial manner, objects of the world of appearance are nevertheless dependent in a real, causative way. Participation has a receptive side, in which things are open to the character-forming reality of the Ideas and yet, in the ethical context, participation involves decision and action on the part of the individual. Finally, it reflects the kinship of the knower and the known. For Plato, participation became a complex idea. He launched it well on its long history.

2. Plotinus and the Neo-Platonic Tradition

The participation formula is not widely in evidence in the generations that immediately followed Plato. We have noted Aristotle's reservations about it. The Stoics rarely used the term because their ontology does not require it. For them, the universe is comprised of matter and force. God is the inherent power in things, the source of life, motion and the Logos which gives them shape. Things affect each other by air currents. All things appear to have a corporeal character, including the soul and God.[10] In a unified universe, in which ultimate power was diffused among all things, the participation formula was unnecessary. The term is found rarely among the early Church Fathers who had other preoccupations. Justin Martyr, however, wrote of his conviction that Plato, the Stoics, poets and historians each had a "participation of the seminal Divine Word."[11]

The full impact of Hellenistic ontological thinking did not reach Christian theology until after Plotinus, who gave it an especially creative reshaping in his own thought. Plotinus consciously sought to re-define what he took to be the real philosophy of Plato in relation to the issues of his day, incorporating, in the process, some of the perspectives of Aristotle and the Stoics along with a very great measure of the religious intensity of the mystery religions. It was in the form he gave it that Neo-Platonism shaped Christian thought for the next eight hundred years but his concepts are not always easy to define, particularly, in Dean Inge's opinion, "the very difficult Platonic doctrine of 'participation.'"[12]

The synthesis Plotinus proposed was founded on the three hypostases. The One is the source of all things, although the One is apart from the world. The Intellect, or nous, emanating from the One, is the seat of an Aristotelian kind of self-contemplation and of the Ideas of the Platonic type. The all-pervading Soul is the source of providential governance of the universe, the immanent order of things, in the manner of the Stoics.

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[10] Eduard Zeller, The Stoics, Epicureans and Skeptics, O.T. Reichel, trans. London: Longmans, 1870, p.121f

[11] Justin Martyr, Second Apology, 2.13 in The Writings of Justin Martyr, in The Fathers of the Church, J.B. Fells, trans., New York: Christian Heritage, 1948, p. 133

[12] W.R. Inge, The Philosophy of Plotinus, London: Longmans, Green, 1923, v. I, p.123

Individual things, in his view, participate in Form (Ideas), Unity and Existence, all of which emanate from the Good which is the One.[13] Forms are "authentic existences" in which participation follows the Platonic pattern. Unities are possible by the second kind of participation, "a participation in the primal unity with the participants remaining distinct from that in which they partake."[14] The entity does not participate in part of the principle of Unity, but "only as entirety with entirety."[15] In a parallel way, things participate in Being.

The ontology of Plotinus reflected the science of his day, which fixed the sun as the center of heat and light, which lost nothing of itself in radiation. In his system, according to Dean Inge, "Spirit can act upon Soul and Soul upon Matter without losing anything in the process."[16] The One radiates Goodness and Being. But it radiates against Matter which has the capacity of resistance. Matter, which is evil, has only an apparent participation in the Ideas or the Good; were its participation authentic, it would be changed. As gold can be molded in various patterns without any basic modification, so the world of matter is intrinsically unchanged.[17]

The corporeality of man, however, is not so utterly resistant. In man, participation means "that the corporeal has approached soul" which in turn gives it something of itself.[18] All realities have, however, a certain place on the scale of being according to their ability to participate. The Authentic All, he maintains, is present to everything, but it "enters as the participant's power may allow." [19]

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[13] Plotinus, The Enneads, McKenna, trans., revised, B.S. Page, New York: Pantheon, I.7.2
[14] Ibid. V.5.4
[15] Ibid. VI.4.8
[16] W.R. Inge, op. cit., p. 196
[17] Plotinus, op. cit. III.6.11-2
[18] Ibid. VI.4.16

The structure of participation is consistent in Plotinus in a way similar to the Platonic outline of the concept. Things in this visible, changing world participate in realities that are invisible, unchanged, eternal. That which is "lower" participates in that which is transcendent. Plotinus will say, for example, that "Being does not participate in the other four principles (Motion, Stability, Identity and Difference) as its genera: they are not prior to Being; they do not transcend it."[20] In both Plato and Plotinus, participation is a relational concept that connects one kind of reality with another. "Body", Plotinus holds, "...as participant does not participate in body; body it has; its participation must be in what is not body."[21]

The difference between the two presentations, Platonic and Neo-Platonic, is that because of the Stoic and Aristotelian influences on his thought, Plotinus could not feel comfortable with the dichotomy between phenomena and the Ideas that Plato described. While one kind of reality participates in another, which requires their separation, there is That which binds them: "...we are not separated from Being; we are in it; nor is Being separated from us: therefore all beings are one."[22] The Oneness of Being contains all. The key sentence of Plotinus is "All that is Yonder is also Here."[23]

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[19] Ibid. VI.4.3
[20] Ibid. VI.2.8
[21] Ibid. VI.4.13
[22] Ibid. VI.5.1
[23] Ibid. V.9.13

On the other hand, Plotinus reveals an element in his thinking that is not present among the Stoics or the Peripatetics. According to Paul Henry, Plotinus differed from these primarily in his understanding of that single, all-powerful dynamis which the Stoics had found diffused through a perfect world. Plotinus saw it concentrated in one supreme reality, the One, the Absolute, which is distinct from that which comes below or after it but is nevertheless the source of everything.[24] It was perhaps an intensive religious experience through the mystery religions that brought him this sense of the intensity of the Being of the One. In the participation ontology of Plotinus, that One is the Primary on whom all things depend. The relation of realities to the One is intimate and real;we might call it a kind of spiritual substantiality.

The Neo-Platonic ontology, along with the participation formula, entered full and regular standing within the fellowship of Christian thought through St. Augustine. Of course, there were important modifications. The One of Plotinus became God the Father of the Judeo-Christian tradition, while the nous of Plotinus became the Augustinian verbum or the Word made flesh. The implicit dualism was remolded in view of the creation doctrine so that matter was no longer intrinsically evil "for all existence as such is good." The participation in which matter was involved was not simply apparent but actual because, Augustine pointed out, "matter participates in something belonging to the ideal world, otherwise it would not be matter."[25]

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[24] Paul Henry, Introduction in Plotinus, Enneads, op. cit.

[25] Augustine, "De Vera Religione" in Augustine: Earlier Writings, Library of Christian Classics, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953, p.236

The structure of the participation-relationship in Augustine again showed something lesser taking part in something greater. God does not participate in greatness but is greatness itself, as is the case with goodness, eternity, omnipotence.[26] Good things are good because they participate in goodness. Augustine advises: "See then if you can pass beyond the things which are good by virtue of their share (participation) in goodness and rise to the vision of the Good whose partial presence makes them good," which Good is God.[27]

Ultimately, for Augustine, God is Being par excellence. He has created things from nothing and given them more or less being, arranging their essences in varying degrees. Gilson explains that "...the inequality and the hierarchical arrangement of essences is based on the inequality of their possible participation in Being, and each essence is represented by one of God's ideas."[28] Developing the position of Plotinus, Augustine understood the world of Ideas as located in the mind of God, the Creator, as the eternal patterns through which all things were formed.[29] Everything is what it is because it participates in God's ideas, through which all things are held together. The What of things is by participation in God's ideas; the That by participation in God's Being. "There is, then, a Chastity-in-itself, and by participating in it all chaste souls are chaste," as Gilson points out, and a Wisdom-in-itself, a Beauty-in-itself, etc. It is at this point that Augustine goes beyond the Platonic and Neo-Platonic formulae to describe an especially Christian content in the participation pattern. For "...if all things are what they are because they resemble something else, then there must be a Resemblance and by participating in it all like things are alike. This primary Resemblance", as Gilson interprets Augustine, "is none other than the Word."[30] Augustine thus presented a Christological solution to the ontological problem.

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[26] cf. "De Trinitate", ibid. pV.10

[27] Augustine, De Libro Arbitrio, II.13.35, London: SCM, p. 42

[28] Etienne Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine, trans. L.E.M. Lynch, London: Gollancz, 1961, p.210

[29] The most direct expression is in De LXXXIII diversis quaestionibus, Quaestio XLVI: De ideis in PL, Migne (ed.) v.XL, col.29-31 where Augustine writes: "Sunt namque ideae principales formae quaedam, vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsae formatae non sunt, ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae in divina intelligentia continentur. Et cum ipsae neque oriantur, neque intereant; secundum eas tamen formari dicitur omne quod oriri et interire potest, et omne quod oritur et interit."

The ontological problem for Augustine was the separation of creature and Creator, man and God, demanded by the Judeo-Christian religious experience, refracted in his own, involving the glory and grace of God and the sin and guilt of man. The ontological scheme of Plotinus, with its participation in a spiritual substance infusing all things but passively resisted by them, was inadequate for the inclusion of these existential realities. Although creation was basically good, there was a split in reality which the Plotinian scheme could not allow, for man must be acknowledged as free to reject his Creator. With this radical element in Augustine's system, the Plotinian infusion-participation relationship needed replacement. Participation is no longer a natural property or capacity in things: it is the gift of God's grace. The Son is the image or likeness of the Father to perfection. He is a "Participation-in-itself" by whom everything that exists can be.

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[30] E. Gilson, op. cit. p.211

The complication of this new ontological structure was carefully thought through by Boethius, Augustinian in faith, Neo-Platonic in appreciation, and Aristotelian in logical clarity gained from translating the Organon. Following the only use of methexis Aristotle allowed, Boethius defined participation in one direction only: "A thing that exists can participate in something else, but absolute Being can in no wise participate in anything."[31] Everything participates in two ways: first, in Being, in order to be; second, in determinations, in order to be some thing. The pure forms or Ideas are within the Divine Mind, and things we see in the sensible world are what they are because of participation in them.

Examining the Neo-Platonic tradition's identification of Goodness and Being in the light of the Aristotelian distinction between substance and accidents on the one hand, and the Augustinian gulf between a good God and sinful men on the other, Boethius asks if things are good by substance or by accident. In the Quomodo Substantiae he rejects both alternatives. Were things good by substance they would be totally good and totally God. That would deny some of the most obvious facts of human existence. Nor can things be considered accidentally good by participation, for they would then be not-good in themselves which would deny the goodness of the Creator, who is the Prime Good. Boethius found his way out of the dilemma by pursuing the Augustinian approach, through the distinction between Creator and creature. "The Prime Good is essentially good in virtue of Being; the secondary good is in its turn good because it derives from the good whose absolute Being is good." In the Prime Good, Being and Goodness are identical; God is One, essentially simple. But as creatures we are not simple. We are good by the choice or will of the Prime Good. Creatures are basically if not substantially good by virtue of being part of the creative action and purpose of God who is goodness-itself.[32] The distinction Boethius has drawn between Creator and creatures in terms of absolute simplicity became decisive for Christian thought, reflected as the split in beings between essence and existence over against their identity in God. The esse of creatures is different from that-which-is, the id quod est. An existing subject is other than its essential nature. With these carefully-drawn Boethian distinctions in mind, the beautiful explanation of Philosophy in his Consolation of Philosophy can be properly understood:

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[31] Boethius, "Quomodo Substantiae" in Tractates, trans. Stewart and Rand, London: Heinemann, New York: Putnam, 1918, p. 41

> Since men become happy by acquiring happiness, and since happiness is divinity itself, it follows that men become happy by acquiring divinity. For as men become just by acquiring integrity, and wise by acquiring wisdom, so they must in a similar way become gods by acquiring divinity. Thus everyone who is happy is a god and, although it is true that God is One by nature, still there may be many gods by participation.[33]

Nowhere is the Neo-Platonic heritage more visible in Christian thought than in the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius. The participation formula is at the center of his mystical system. His classic ontological statement is esse omnium est superesse deitas, the being of all things is the Deity, above being. He continues: "things living participate in its life-giving power, above all life; things rational and intellectual participate in its self-perfect and pre-eminently perfect wisdom, above all reason and mind."[34]

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[32] cf. L.-B. Geiger, La Participation dans la Philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin, Paris: Vrin, 1942. Fr. Geiger draws the distinction clearly: "On dirait volontiers que la bonté est attribuée à la substance non pas essentialiter mais per causalitatem." p.44

[33] Boethius, The Consolation of Philosophy, trans. R. Green, New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1962, p.63

Pseudo-Dionysius is not troubled, as Boethius was, by the identification of Being and the Good, with its implications. Everything that is, participates in the Good, "for that which is altogether without participation in the Good, neither is anything nor is capable of anything."[35] Similarly, things are beautiful in view of their participation in beauty. The Pseudo-Dionysian scheme was hierarchical, with things having their place on the scale of Being and Goodness by degree of participation. Angelic minds, for example, are above other beings "and think and know, above sensible perception and reason and, beyond all the other existing beings, aspire to, and participate in, the Beautiful and the Good; they are more around the Good, participating in It more abundantly, having received larger and greater gifts from It."[36] The participation formula as used here implies the Plotinian kind of "spiritual substantiality." In the participation-relationship, Being, Goodness, or Beauty is infused into the participant.

The concept does, however, point to the separation of the realities involved in the relationship, as well as their relative identity. Pseudo-Dionysius formulates three ways of predicating about the transcendent

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[34] Pseudo-Dionysius, The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite, trans. J. Parker, London: Parker, 1897, "On the Heavenly Hierarchy" 4.1

[35] Pseudo-Dionysius, op. cit. "On the Divine Names", 4.32

[36] Ibid. 5.3

Deity: positive, negative and superlative. The participation concept had this triangularity in its structure in his system: the elements of identity, separation and transcendence.

The basic view of John Scotus Erigena, who translated Pseudo-Dionysius into Latin and introduced him to the West, is very close to his subject's. Two distinctive points of emphasis, however, give participation a different coloration in his thought. The one is a stress on the capacity of man to enlarge or deepen his participation in the divine existence in which he partakes, thus distinguishing himself from animal nature: "...through his reason and intellect and his thoughts of the Eternal, he shares in celestial being." With this part of him, God "holds converse in men that are worthy."[37]

The other stress in Erigena has its origin, according to Gilson, in Erigena's writing Latin but thinking Greek. Gilson observes that Erigena sounds like a pantheist, for God is present in the immaterial and material substances "as in his participations." But "participations" really signifies "distributions": it did not mean that the creature was a part of God. Actual existents are imperfect images of their true realities in the Divine Mind. Through these realities, God is present in the existents, the effects of his creativity. If the participation formula in usage tends to be weighted toward one or the other side of its polarity of elements, either towards separation or identity, it is fair to say that in Pseudo-Dionysius and Erigena, the balance tips toward identity, though the separation is never lost.

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[37] John Scotus Erigena, "De Divisione Naturae" IV.5, quoted in A. Gardner, Studies in John the Scot (Erigena), London: Oxford, 1900, p.33-4

Much the same is the case with the other medieval Platonists, in the ontology of St. Anselm or of Gilbert de la Porrée. However, the latter, by again emphasizing the Boethian distinction between the id quod est and the esse of an entity, stresses the separation. As this tradition of thought reached its culmination in St. Bonaventura, this element is again apparent.

The distinctive character of Bonaventura's recasting of the Platonic theory of Ideas, in Gilson's view, is to be observed in the many images of productivity and generation which he uses to describe Ideas as expressions of God and the things of the sensible world, in their turn, as the expressions of the Ideas. God is "pure act", as he was for Thomas Aquinas, but in Bonaventura's writings he is more a productive source than a theoretical necessity. The participation of existents is the consequence of God's continuing creative action.

Bonaventura is insistent upon the separation between creatures and Creator. If being were affirmed univocally of them both, "finite things would participate in God really and substantively, and being would be a third term common to God and creatures."[38] Participation in Bonaventura's ontological scheme is a matter of resemblance rather than substantiality. Even the human will, which would have a much greater resemblance to God than material things, "does not participate in resemblance to God as the swan and snow participate in the same whiteness, but only as the mirror participates in the resemblance of objects."[39] We see here the Augustinian categories again, of likeness or resemblance, rather than substantial sharing. This is not to say, however, that for Bonaventura the participation-relationship was extrinsic and unreal. On the contrary, the resemblance of Father and Son has demonstrated that resemblance is the central reality in existence. In the light of that Resemblance, the individual can look with attentiveness and intensity into his own soul and discover his own participation in the Divine, which constitutes his being.

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[38] E. Gilson makes this assertion in The Philosophy of St. Bonaventura, London: Sheed and Ward, 1938, p.208, citing two references: "Similitudo... dicitur: uno modo secundum convenientiam duorum in tertio, et haec est similitudo secundum univocationem" (I Sent. 35,1) and "Est similitudo univocationis sive participationis et similitudo imitationis et expressionis. Similitudo participationis nulla est omnino,quia nihil est commune (sc. Deo et creaturae)" ad 2.

3. The Participation Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas

In the systematic thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the participation formula appears more broadly, more specifically defined, and even more frequently than in the directly Platonic tradition of medieval theology. In the words of one commentator, "if the Summa be considered in one sweeping view it may be seen that the author has envisioned a complete system of participation."[40] The concept appears at the critical junctures of the Thomist system, as Aquinas speaks of logical participation of species in genus (following Aristotle and Boethius); the participation of substance in its accidents and of matter in form; and the participation of effects in the perfection of their causes. Recent Thomist scholarship has placed an increasing emphasis on the Platonic elements in Thomist thought, citing the participation formula as an especially evident vestige of them.[41]

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[39] Ibid. p.216

[40] M. Annice, "Historical Sketch of the Theory of Participation" in The New Scholasticism, v. 26, 1952, p.49

[41] E. Gilson, The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas London: Gollancz, 1957, p. 74. Arthur Little has written on The Platonic

Fr. L.-B. Geiger, in a detailed study of the concept in Aquinas, concludes that participation is the key to his thought, that his "philosophy of participation" is founded on the participation of existents in the Primary Perfection according to an hierarchical structure.[42]

In the Commentary on the *De Trinitate* of Boethius, Aquinas defines the concept:

> to participate is to receive a part: in every situation in which a being receives in a particular way, from another, that which belongs to it, it is *said* to participate in it. Man participates in animality - he does not

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Heritage of Thomism, Dublin: Golden Eagle, 1950, saying that "whether wittingly or unwittingly, he taught a Platonic doctrine rejected by Aristotle when he taught participation." Charles A. Hart speaks of the work of St. Thomas as "a highly original synthesis with Platonic influence superseding that of Aristotle," in "Participation in the Thomistic Five Ways" in *The New Scholasticism*, v.26, 1952, pp.267-82. G.F. Klubertanz, in *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy*, Chicago: Loyola, 1960, p. 21, presents a chart of the frequency of Aquinas' use of the participation formula.

I Sentences	(1254-6)	7
De Veritate	(1256-9)	4
De Potentia	(1259-68)	6
Contra Gentiles	(1261-4)	11
Summa theologiae prima pars	(1266-8)	55
Metaphysica	(1272)	4
		126

[42] L.-B. Geiger, op. cit. p.451, sums up: "Au terme de ce travail, si nous essayons de dégager quelques conclusions générales, nous devrons dire tout d'abord que la philosophie de S. Thomas peut être appelée à juste titre une philosophie de la participation. La participation, surtout sous la form d'une pure hiérarchie formelle, y joue en rôle de tout premier plan. L'univers, en sa structure la plus profonde, est essentiellement une participation de la Perfection Premiére et simple dont il procéde. Il est avant tout le reflet et l'imitation d'un exemplaire absolument parfait, tout comme les individus n'étaient aux yeux de Platon que la participation à des Idées immuables." Another full-length study of the subject is by Cornelio Fabro, *La Nozione Metafisica di Participatione secondo S. Tomaso d'Aquino*, Milan, 1939

> possess the nature of animality in its totality. In the same way, Socrates participates in man-ness.[43]

Aquinas goes on to speak of participation of substance in accidents and effects in their causes. The concept in Aquinas must be interpreted substantially. Socrates receives a part of man-ness. The Augustinian idea relating participation to the eternal generation of the Word or divine Wisdom by the Father appears, substantively understood. "This nativity," according to Aquinas, "is the beginning of every other nativity, as it is the only one involving perfect participation in the nature of the generator: but all others are imperfect according as the one generated receives either a part of the substance of the generator or only a similitude: from this it follows that from the aforesaid nativity, every other is derived by a kind of imitation."[44] Perfect participation is substantial; the imperfect participations of everything other than the Divine Word are more or less substantial and less or more imitative according to their degree of reality, their place in the hierarchy of Being and Perfection. And yet Aquinas wants to avoid crudely substantial connotations. He remarks, reflecting the science of his day, that whiteness participates in color though it does not receive color substantially.

In dealing with the Boethian dilemma of things participating in goodness essentially or accidentally, Aquinas seeks to advance beyond substantiality while including it. As in Boethius, the goodness of things is dependent upon their Creator. But in Aquinas, this principle receives a special and characteristic twist. A being is good not by its essence which is its potentiality nor by its accidents but by its existence, by virtue of the fact that it is rather than by virtue of what it is. Its goodness is in its participation in the total Perfection, which requires existence and which is of God. As Geiger emphasizes, "un étre est donc bon, premiérement et immédiatement, par son existence, par sa réalité, non par son essence."[45] Beings in the Thomist system, then, participate in their Forms, in Being-itself, and in Perfection.

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[43] St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius: "Est autem participare quasi partem capere; et ideo quando aliquid particulariter recipit id quod ad elterum pertinet universaliter, dicitur participare illud. Ita homo dicitur participare animal, quia non habet rationem animalis secondum totam communitatem; et eadem ratione Socrates participat hominem..." Cap.2 in Geiger, op. cit., p.172

[44] St. Thomas Aquinas, The Trinity and the Unicity of the Intellect, trans. R.E. Brennan, St. Louis: Herder, 1946, p.10

A cardinal Thomist principle is that "God himself is his own being, which can be said of no other being."[46] God alone, we read in the Contra Gentiles, "is being by his very essence; all other things participate in being."[47] The ipsum esse formula is a basic axis of the Thomist system. God is pure Act; the actuality of things is derived from him. In the Summa Theologiae, Aquinas draws a parallel between the participation of an individual man in human nature and that of every created being in the nature of being. God alone is His own being.[48] He expands this principle in another place. The divine esse is "subsistent and absolute" while being is predicated of all creatures by participation. "No creature is its own existence, but rather is a being which has existence. In the same way, God is essentially good, because He is goodness itself; creatures are called good by participation because they have goodness."[49] The goodness of things, along with their being, may be thought of as substantial in that these are real, but they are derived and not intrinsic to the order of reality in which beings find their place. "That which has fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation."[50]

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[45] L.-B. Geiger, op. cit. p.60

[46] St. Thomas Aquinas, Questiones disputatae de spiritualibus creaturis

[47] St. Thomas Aquinas, Contra Gentiles, 15.16

[48] St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, q.45,a.5

The even more crucial side of the Thomist use of the participation formula is its causative character in the great synthesis of Aquinas. In his schema, the multiple causes of Aristotle are united in God who is the First Being and Perfection and is, at once, the efficient, formal, exemplary, and final cause of all things. Aquinas holds that "what is essentially so is the efficient cause of things that are so by sharing (participation)."[51] Things are diversified by their diverse participations in being, but are all "caused by one First Being, who possesses being most perfectly."[52] In this connection, he quotes "the Philosopher" whose principle was that whatever is greatest in being or truth is the cause of being or truth.

Among the five classic arguments for the existence of God in Aquinas, the fourth is based on the participation formula and the gradation of things. This proof was outlined in an anticipatory way as follows:

> Since all things which are participate in existence and are beings by participation, there must necessarily be a being

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[49] Quodlibet, 2.a.3

[50] Summa Theologiae, q.14,a.9

[51] Contra Gentiles, 2.15 in T. Gilby, trans. St. Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical Texts, London: Oxford, 1951, p.59

[52] Summa Theologiae, q.44,a.1

> at the summit of all things who is existence by his very essence, whose essence is identical with his existence. This being is God, the sufficient, most honorable, and perfect cause of all existence, from whom all things which are participate in being.[53]

C.A. Hart developed the thesis that all of the arguments must have the fundamental participation principle at their core if they are to terminate with God.[54] The first two arguments, from motion and efficient causation, both depend on the causal principle. Efficiency - or effectiveness - is actually an aspect of the perfection of existence in the Thomist view. Similarly the third argument, from necessary existence, is based on the greater perfection of that which necessarily must be, while the fifth, from design, should be understood in terms of God as Infinite Intelligence, in the perfection of whose design things participate. We need not follow Hart all the way to acknowledge two important facts: that the five proofs have a consistency with each other and that the participation formula is a way of designating that consistency.

In the view of Aquinas, the participation concept has some protective functions. It guards against identifying one kind of reality with another. Light may be said to belong to a lighted object by participation but it belongs to a separately existing light by essence.[55] Further, the formula guards the basic priority in the relationship of beings to Being. There is no mutual participation of God and beings. The structure of the concept avoids the difficulties of pantheism. Gilson comments that the participation term,

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[53] In Joann, 26.1
[54] C.A. Hart, op. cit.
[55] Quodlibet, 2.a.3

> far from implying any pantheistic signification...on the contrary, aims at removing it. Participation expresses both the bond uniting the creature to the Creator, which makes creation intelligible, and the separation which prohibits them from intermingling.

To participate is to derive and receive being from another and "the fact of receiving being from God is the best proof the receiver is not God."[56]

Alongside this fundamental axis of participation of beings in Being-itself in the Thomist system is the relationship of beings to their Forms or Ideas. Aquinas explicitly rejects the separate existence of Forms apart from sensible reality, opting for the Aristotelian position that Forms are in rebus.[57] The formality of things is embodied within them, though not perfectly. The participation in the Form is defective; the perfect Form is, as for Augustine, in the mind of God. Thus, things are more truly themselves in God than they are in themselves. Nevertheless, placing the Forms in the mind of God does not separate them from the structure of Being. God, as single ultimate principle, encloses all perfections and is their ultimate source.[58] God's perfection implies that he knows things not only in general, in their Forms, but also in particular, for he "would not know himself perfectly did he not also know how his perfections could be shared."[59] The Thomist system presents not only a structure of Being but an hierarchical structure of Perfection.

God, the fundamental cause of all things, is not only Being-itself but Perfection-itself. For Aquinas, "...the divine essence excels all creatures" who have their proper likeness according to the diverse ways they participate in it and imitate it.[60] That which is "essentially some perfection" is the "proper cause of that which has perfection through participation."[61] The Forms are perfections within Perfection. Yet although things have perfection to a degree and are not perfection, their perfection-by-participation is intrinsic rather than external to them, for its foundation is in their existence. Aquinas can say that while no one creature can adequately reflect the perfection of God, the totality of things in the universe "more perfectly participates in and represents the divine goodness."[62]

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[56] E. Gilson, The History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, New York: Random House, 1955, p.373

[57] Summa Theologiae, q.6,a.4

[58] R.J. Henle, St. Thomas and Platonism, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1956 p.384

[59] Summa Theolgiae, I,14.6 in Gilby, op. cit. p.104

The participation formula in relation to Perfection is reflected in other contexts: our wisdom is a participation in the divine wisdom[63] and there are degrees of participation in life - vegetative, sensitive and rational - rooted in the First Cause of life who is life essentially.[64] Likewise, God is Will and Truth simply and perfectly while creatures have these by participation. Are then things evil by participation in a highest cause of evil? Aquinas answers, by no means: "No being is called evil by participation, but by privation of participation."[65]

The question of the privation of participation brings to light the essential structure of the Thomist ontology which holds that the diversity of things is a dimension of the perfection of God. In Aquinas we do not find that substance ~~that~~ resists participation, as in classical Greek philosophy. To the Pythagoreans, the Infinite was a formless mass which was limited by number. Parmenides held that were the totality of Being unlimited, it would be imperfect and unfinished. Plato never called the Idea of the Good "infinite" but absolutely one and simple. In Aristotle, form is a principle of limits and intelligibility. In the Greek view, matter or potency is undetermined until it receives the imprint of act or limitation of Form, which it inherently resists. Plotinus completely reversed this position. For him, the Infinite is above beings rather than beneath them; the infinite-finite dichotomy now corresponds to the perfect-imperfect. Bruschvicg put it succinctly: "Le Divin change de camp: il passe du fini à l'infini."[66] Philo had been the first to ascribe infinity to God, calling him "uncircumscribed." Plotinus, using the old Greek word apeiron, made it central to his synthesis, describing the Infinite as a plenitude of perfection compared with the limited participations beneath it. Proclus put the Plotinian view into a rigid schematization which profoundly influenced medieval thought through Pseudo-Dionysius and the Liber de Causis thought to have been Aristotle's. There we read that:

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[60] Ibid. q.14,a.6
[61] Contra Gentiles, 15.21
[62] Summa Theologiae, I,17.80, cf. Contra Gentiles, 15.22
[63] Ibid. II-II,32.1
[64] Ibid. I,17.5
[65] Ibid. I,49.3

> ...the first Goodness pours down goodness over all things by a single influx. But each thing receives of this influx according to the measure of its own power and its own being. The goodness and gifts of the First Cause are diversified by virtue of the recipient...some receive more, others less.[67]

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[66] From Le rôle du Pythagorisme dans l'evolution des idées, Paris, 1937, p.23, cited in W. Norris Clarke, "The Limitation of Act by Potency: Aristotelianism or Neo-Platonism" in The New Scholasticism, v. 26, 1952, p. 184

[67] Cited in Clarke, op. cit. p.188

The originality of Aquinas was in avoiding the consequences of making finitude and limitation correspond with evil. An absolute plenitude of Perfection is in God. Beings participate in the Perfection. Their limitations are good for only through the diversity of the Creation could the utter perfection of the Creator be reflected. Aquinas can thus acknowledge limitation by species and affirm it, saying that "every creature has its own proper species, according to which it participates in some way in the likeness of the divine essence."[68] And he can attribute limitation to the capacity of the participant, without any connotation of inherent evil. "Now participated existence is limited by the capacity of the participator, so that God alone who is his own existence is pure act and infinite."[69] The very limitation of creatures enhances the Perfection of the Creator. Anton Pegis suggests that the Thomist doctrine of creation was "in its metaphysical spirit and meaning something genuinely original in the history of Christian thought" because of the total and unique dependence of all things, by participation, on God.[70]

The development of the participation concept reached a watershed in Aquinas. Participation is found more frequently and at more crucial junctures in Thomist thought than in any other system until Tillich's. In Aquinas, the term has an ontic as well as a formal application.

Ontic participation in the tradition of Parmenides, Plotinus and

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[68] *Summa Theologiae*, I,15.2

[69] Ibid. I,75.5

[70] Anton C. Pegis, *Thomism as a Philosophy*, W.Hartford: St. Joseph College Press, 1961, p.24

Neo-Platonic Christian thought involves the participation of beings in Being-itself. Beings participate in Being-itself in order to be. Beings are dependent on Being-itself; they have Being but are not Being. Aquinas speaks of participation as meaning having "a part of"; beings do not have the totality of Being-itself but they do have a part, according to their places on the scale of Being. Nevertheless, while ontic participation is a substantial matter in the Thomist system, Aquinas is no pantheist, because he emphasizes the distinction between God, identical in essence and existence, and created things which are not. Further, he consistently maintains the utter dependence of creatures on the Creator. For while ontic participation has a substantial dimension, it also has a causative one. Being-itself is the First Cause of beings, the Creator of the created.

The other strand in the Thomist concept of participation is formal. With the modifications we have noted to accommodate the theory to the views of Aristotle, Aquinas accepted Plato's Ideas or Forms and the participation of entities of sensible reality in them, following Augustine. In this formal participation both substantial and causative aspects are again evident. Aquinas speaks of Socrates receiving a part of man-ness. The Form is an element of limitation or determination that is effective in setting out the boundaries of an existent. Located in the mind of God, that is to say, in the divine creative activity, the Forms have clearly a causative function, enabling things to be what they are, just as the ontic causation determines that they are. Things are not, however, perfect embodiments of their Forms. At this point, Aquinas allows for evil. Nevertheless, human action cannot be so contrary to human ideality that it can negate the goodness of creation as an image of the Perfection of God. The diverse participations of things in their Ideas are indicative of the plenitude of the divine perfection. The participation formula takes on uniquely new meanings in the thought of Aquinas, consonant with the central role it plays in his original system.

4. Participation in the Modern Era

The virtual disappearance of the participation concept, or at least its retreat from a forward position in Western thought after Aquinas, can be attributed to two major factors, the one philosophical and the other theological. Philosophically, of course, the decisive development was the ascendance of nominalism following William of Occam. Occam's razor cut away anything not absolutely necessary to the understanding of the individual things and events we experience. The concern of thought came to be with the entelechy not the ideality of things. In ontological terms, this perspective is manifest in the Monads of Leibniz, where each develops out of its own Gestalt and none can really influence another. More often, however, ontology has been eschewed entirely by this tradition which conceives the philosophic task as building only on empirically verifiable foundations. The Kantian divorce of experienced things from the mind which experiences them was an event of great magnitude, resulting in the inability of the knower really to know the Ding-an-sich. In its aftermath, a participation concept seems to be an anomaly. In nominalism the element of separation is carried to the point of breaking the tension that is in the participation concept. On the other hand, in the idealist tradition, the element of identity is so dominant that the concept is unnecessary. A forerunner of this school was Spinoza, whose ontology was one of complete order, wherein "individual things are modes by which the attributes of God are expressed in a certain and determinate manner; that is to say, they are things which express, in a certain and determinate manner, the power of God, by which He is and acts."[71] For Spinoza, there can be no "substance" beside God, that is, "nothing which is in itself and is conceived through itself."[72] The principle is similar to the Thomist one, that only God _is_ Being while things _have_ being. But in Spinoza, the element of identity in substance is so dominant that the participation term cannot appear. Similarly in Hegel, the Real does not simply participate in the Rational, it _is_ the Rational. Realities are all _aufgehoben_, elevated and included in the Idea. There is too little distance between Nature and Idea for participation to be required. The philosophic reason for the general disappearance of the participation concept is that its necessary ontological substructure, with elements of separation and identity, was removed, from the nominalist side in the direction of separation and from the idealist, of identity.

The theological factor came with the Reformation. Justification by grace through faith implied a radical break between creature and Creator. Reformation theology saw no place in the Thomist system for the full reality of evil. In the medieval synthesis, evil was but "privation of participation," merely being less than good. For Luther and Calvin this did justice neither to the depth and pervasiveness of human sin nor to the purity of the good. These Reformers insisted on such a distance between man and God that human participation in the image, wisdom, life or nature of God as a natural condition was incomprehensible. The Reformation event placed at least Protestant theology in a new situation, in which ontological and/or formal participation was no longer a viable concept.

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[71] Baruch Spinoza, _Ethic_, Pt.III,prop.vi, _Spinoza Selections_, John Wild (ed.), New York and London: Scribner's, 1930, p.215

[72] Ibid. Pt.I,prop.xv, p.108

Nevertheless, in spite of these general trends, the participation formula did continue to have some currency. In the medieval mystical tradition, an ontology of being remained. Nicholas of Cusa wrote of the participation of finite substances in eternal reality.[73] Edmond Vansteenberghe writes:

> ...Cusa considère plutôt les choses dans leur rapport avec Dieu, et alors il expose la théorie platonicienne de la *participation*. Tous les êtres, dit-il, participent diversement de la réalité divine, soit en eux-mêmes, et alors ce sont des substances, soit par l'intermédiare des substances, et ce sont des accidents.[74]

While we would anticipate the concept being carried on in the mystical tradition, our expectation would be that, rejecting an ontological and/or formal participation in the classic formulation, the Reformers would use the concept sparingly, if at all. Liberal-humanists of the period, such as Osiander, who believed man possessed an "essential righteousness" mixed with his potentials for sin might be the exception. Actually, in the classical-Reformation tradition, the participation concept is to be observed, but with a new complexity.

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[73] *Cusanus Konkordanz*, Eduard Zellinger, (ed.), München: Hueber, 1960, 13, 69f.,203. "Alima sunt entia immediatius entitatem maximam in seipsa participantia: ut sunt emplices finitae substantiae. Et sunt alia entia non per se, sed per medium substantiarum entitatem participantia, ut sunt accidentia...ita maximum omnium qualitercumque diversimode participantium." in "De docta ignorantia", I.xviii

[74] Edmond Vansteenberghe, *Le Cardinal Nicolas de Cues: L'action la Pensée*, Frankfurt am Main: Minerva, 1963 (2nd.ed.) p.327

Luther, with his profound awareness of the gulf between creature and Creator, avoided using the term in the ontological context in spite of his equally vivid sense of the immanence of God in the creation. He would say that God is "present entirely in every small kernel of grain and at the same time in all, above all, and outside all creatures."[75] In his commentaries on New Testament passages in which the term appears, such as I Corinthians 10:16, he speaks of partaking but he shuns regular usage apparently because "participations" could be purchased in masses said in monasteries or sacred places where one could not attend, an arrangement he, of course, vigorously denounced.[76] He does, however, use the concept sacramentally because it was crucial for him soteriologically. Commenting on Galatians 2:20, he reveals the essence of the relationship of the believer and Christ: "...Christ and I must be so closely attached that He lives in me and I in Him."[77] The dynamics of his soteriology are clear as he introduces the argument of Galatians by distinguishing between two kinds of righteousness, the "active" righteousness of the law and its works and the "passive" Christian righteousness which the believer has "above this life" which has, in the Spirit, sanctifying power.[78] In this righteousness, good works are done spontaneously, in the Spirit. These are the dynamics of participation in Christ.

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[75] Luther as quoted in Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, trans. Bertram, St. Louis: Concordia, 1958, p.188

[76] Luther's Works, St. Louis: Concordia, v.36, p.35,n.79

[77] Luther's Works, v.26, p.167

Calvin employs the concept more explicitly in the same context. The soteriological relation is sustained by the mystical union of the believer with Christ. He writes:

> The sum of the whole is this - that Christ, when he illuminates us with faith by the power of his Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into his body, that we may become partakers of all his benefits.[79]

Calvin reverses the traditional order, insisting on the ~~precedence~~ priority of sanctification over justification. Christ is "given us by the goodness of God, is apprehended and possessed by us by faith, by a participation of whom we receive especially two benefits," which are reconciliation and regeneration.[80] Sanctification in his Spirit is not a process that commences after justification has been established but is part of the same essential act of grace. The believer is so united with Christ that he is not only a "partaker of his Spirit" but "of his humanity, in which he rendered complete obedience to God his Father, to satisfy our debts."[81] The believer participates in the character of Christ, in his obedience. The soteriological relation is nurtured by Word and Sacrament. He maintains that the Body of Christ "is indeed absent in respect of place, but that we enjoy a spiritual participation in it, every obstacle on the score of distance being surmounted by his divine virtue."[82]

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[78] Ibid. p.9

[79] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans.J.Allen, Philadelphia; Presbyterian Board of Education, 1936, III,II.35, v.I,p.639

[80] Ibid. III,XI.1, p.792

[81] John Calvin, Theological Treatises, trans. J.K.S.Reid, Philadelphia; Westminster, 1954, p.146

For Peter Martyr, a mystical union with Christ is again the driving force of the Christian life; the Holy Spirit is "...calling man to faith and uniting him to Christ."[83] In his Commentary on I Corinthians, he describes the relationship with God "unto whom we are joined in spirit by faith, hope and charity and all virtues, together with all believers in Christ."[84] In the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, "we receive Christ and are renewed in spirit and body," the former being the sacrament of regeneration, the latter of spiritual nourishment.[85] In the classical Reformation tradition, participation bears the nature of the kind of "spiritual substantiality" we have observed in the Neo-Platonic strand of medieval thought, only the context is the believer's relationship to God in Christ. It denotes an existential involvement, a receptiveness, and an active, decisive response.

The history of the participation concept is more difficult to trace in the writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for reasons we have noted. In some, however, we can discern the essential components of the ontological version of the formula, though the term itself is not present. The German mystic, Jacob Boehme, who wrote a great deal about the Ground of Being, does not say that nature is God but does say that God gives power to every life according to its desire, for he himself is All.[86]

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[82] Ibid. p.270

[83] Joseph C. McLelland, The Visible Words of God, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, p.124

[84] Cited in ibid. p.124

[85] Cited in ibid. p.147

[86] Jakob Boehme, Signatura Rerum, vii.42

To him, the creation is a manifestation of the all-essential, unsearchable God.[87] In the work of others, it may be argued that participation is a necessary concept for the adequate expression of their thought though, again, they themselves do not employ the term. Tillich argues this way concerning the Monads of Leibniz: though independent of one another in a most extreme way, each has the same structure of independent being. Each is a microcosm, participating in some way in the structure of all. The formula is present in both components and expression in Descartes, for whom an effect participates in its cause, for there is nothing within it that does not pre-exist in that cause. Descartes' ontological structure demands the undergirding of God in whose power of Being things participate. "If God ceased from his co-operation, everything that he has created would at once vanish into nothing."[88]

Prior to Tillich, the ontological and formal types of participation of the Platonic and Thomist traditions and the existential and soteriological types of the Reformation experience, came together in one writer - Friedrich Schleiermacher. Tillich reveals that he had from his earliest study found Schleiermacher "congenial."[89] However, more than congeniality of temperament draws the two men together. Tillich has also said that Schleiermacher confronts every attempt at theological thinking with a decision, either to seek the development of a synthesis in which elements of contemporary culture can cohere with the Christian message or simply to restate orthodox positions with some new terminology. "My decision," he confesses, "...is thoroughly on the side of Schleiermacher," who chose the former. (Pers. 91)

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[87] Ibid. xvi.1

[88] Rene Descartes, Philosophical Writings, trans. Anscombe and Geach, Edinburgh and New York: Nelson, 1954, p.269

[89] Paul Tillich, "Autobiographical Reflections" in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.6

In Schleiermacher's thought, the formal type of participation is the window through which the ontological type may be observed. The man of humble, committed and believing spirit "embraces all human nature" in his own nature. Schleiermacher addresses such an individual with the startling challenge that "the whole of humanity lives and works in you."[90] What is more, not only is humanity in its ideality embodied in such an individual, but he is in a microcosmic way, the manifestation of everything.

> Philosophy, exalting man to the consciousness of his reciprocity with the world, teaching him to know himself, not as a separate individual but as a living, operative member of the Whole, will no longer endure to see the man who steadfastly turns his eye to his own spirit in search of the Universe, pine in poverty and need. The anxious wall of separation is broken down. The outer world is only another inner world. Everything is the reflection of his own spirit, as his spirit is the copy of all things.[91]

The individual man needs to recognize himself as the place in which nature achieves self-consciousness. In this participation in human-ness, he recognizes his participation and grounding "in the eternal being that has united itself with time in Man" as Richard Niebuhr interprets Schleiermacher's view. Niebuhr holds that at this point, the relation between Tillich and Schleiermacher is most obvious, a fact which is understandable particularly because here the element of Schelling's influence is manifest.[92]

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[90] Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, trans. J. Oman, New York; Harper, 1958, p.79

[91] Ibid. p.141

[92] Richard R. Niebuhr, Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion, New York: Scribner's, 1964, p.65

Schleiermacher is too much a son of the Reformation to conceive of this ontological participation in an entirely natural and substantial way, however. In view of the distance between creature and Creator, the finite and the Infinite, the fulfillment of participation must be mediated. It is neither a given of human existence nor an achievement of the human spirit. In his epochal On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, Schleiermacher commends Christianity as the highest form of religion because at its center is a mediation between the Infinite and the finite which "must belong to both sides, participating in the Divine Essence in the same way and in the same sense in which it participates in human nature."[93] To this soteriological type of participation in which the believer participates existentially, we must return as we analyze Tillich's position. Here it is important only to recognize its presence in the nineteenth century theologian.

At least two other types of participation are evident in Schleiermacher as well. The believer participates existentially in Christ. In the Speeches, religion's despisers are told they need to be participants in a religion if they are to understand the phenomena well enough to criticize.[94] Through the Reformation principle of faith, a universal aspect of religion is discovered. A fourth type of participation in Schleiermacher is the cultural. In Die Weinachstfeier: Ein Gespräch, he holds that only by participating in the Christmas festival can one appreciate the full significance of the Logos-made-flesh. Cultural forms may have a limiting influence by constricting the horizons of the individual, but on the other hand, participation in them is a necessary means for the development of the Gefühl (feeling) that is the channel for contact with reality. The individual has an underivable selfhood, an Eigenthümlichkeit, that stands over against the community but not in contradiction to it. A participation-relationship with the community, a Gemeinschaftlichkeit, makes feeling, "the original expression of an immediate existence-relationship," possible.[95] Cultural participation is rooted in participation in community, and participation in community takes the form of participation in its culture.

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[93] Schleiermacher, op. cit. p.247
[94] Ibid. p.223

Reading and listening to Tillich against this background, one finds it easy to see why he employs the participation concept with such frequency. Tillich acknowledges that he thinks in the Platonic tradition. He bears witness to the decisive significance of the Reformation. He affirms a congeniality with Schleiermacher, in tradition as well as task. And he consciously deals with the basic problems of Western thought, as Aquinas had, the problems of beings and Being-itself.

Nietzsche has written:

> The unhistorical and the historical are needed equally for the health of an individual, a people, and a culture... (men must) know how to forget at the right time as well as how to remember at the right time.[96]

We shall now be able to observe what Tillich has "remembered" and what he has "forgotten", what he has retained, rejected and transformed in his own use of participation.

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[95] Cited in Niebuhr, op. cit. p.121

[96] Cited in Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche, New York: Meridian,1956,p.123

CHAPTER II

THE PARTICIPATION OF BEINGS IN BEING

> There are notions which resist definition and whose meaning can only be shown by their configuration with other notions. The basic ontological concepts fall in this category. The philosophical task with respect to them is not to define them but to illuminate them by showing how they appear in different constellations.[1]

If Paul Tillich has nowhere given an adequate definition of the concept of participation that covers the multiple meanings of the term as he employs it, he has, at least, given a reason for not doing so. Ontological concepts are so basic, serving as presuppositions of every experience and each attempt to clarify them, that on the one hand they are too primal and on the other, too omnipresent for precise identification. Concepts like Being, Individualization, Participation are so elemental in Tillich's system that any attempt to say anything about them with precision seems to narrow their significance. On the other hand, their pervasiveness in his thought multiplies the connotations they carry to the degree that every attempted comprehensive statement about them is frustrated. The alternative to definition, which might perhaps become a prelude to definition, is the task Tillich suggests. We shall seek illumination on the concept of participation in the different constellations in which it appears in Tillich's system, beginning with the constellation which he sees as primary, the ontological. The points of navigational reference within this constellation include the question of Being, the concepts of the Ground and Power of Being or

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[1] Paul Tillich, "Reply to Interpretation and Criticism" in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.330

Being-itself, the negation of Being, the self-world ontological structure, the polarities within that structure, the matter of analogy between the being of beings and Being-itself and the nature of the divine transcendence. If the participation concept takes on diverse colorations in these configurations, we should nevertheless also expect a systematic consistency among them.

1. The Question of Being

To say that something participates in the power and structure of Being is the inevitable corollary of saying that it is, according to Tillich. Every being participates in Being-itself and its structure, having this relationship in common with everything else that is. Participation in being is the ontological foundation of Tillich's system.

The anthropological foundation is made secure alongside it, for though everything "participates in the structure of being...man alone is immediately aware of this structure." (ST I,168) This is not only true of man qua man, but of each person. In The Courage to Be, where Tillich unfolds the ontological structures as they are revealed in the existential realities of human life, he maintains that particularly in the moments when a man experiences the threat of non-being, in terms of the anxieties of guilt and condemnation, fate and death, or doubt and meaninglessness, he is aware of his participation in Being-itself. (CB,156) It is at such moments that a man asks, in one form or another, the ontological questions, why am I? why is anything? what does it mean to be?

In such a Nullspunktsituation, a man asks the question whose philosophic history goes back as far as Parmenides and the pre-Socratics, the question of Aristotle's "first philosophy", the question of being. The fact that though everything participates in being, only man asks its question, seems to indicate a special quality in his participation. For Tillich asks us to consider what it means to ask questions. Does it not imply that we do not have that for which we ask? And yet, is it not true that in order to be able to ask for something, we must have it in part, or it could not be the object of our quest? "He who asks has and has not at the same time." (BR,11) When man asks the question of being, he is separated from it while belonging to it. We recall that participation "points to an element of identity in that which is different." The fact that man asks the question about the infinite to which he belongs is a symptom both of his belonging to and separation from the infinite. (ST I,61) In the interpretation of Edward Farley, having experienced the shock of non-being, man "goes from thing to thing, discontent with all things, and searching for something more. Ontology thus is the systematic elaboration of natural curiosity and existential involvement."[2] The question as Schelling restated it, "why is there something, why not nothing?" carries man above everything given in nature. The foundations of man's thought are his participations.

Ontology is thus the "center of all philosophy" for Tillich. (BR,6) Ontology is the location, on the one hand, of points of conjunction and, on the other, of points of departure between philosophy and theology. Philosophy is "that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object." (ST I, 18) In approaching reality as such, as a whole, it asks the question of the structure of being. It analyzes, ontologically, the presence of being and its structure in the various realms of being, in man, history, values, knowledge and in religion. (BR, 8)

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[2] Edward Farley, The Transcendence of God, Philadelphia: Westminster, p.82

But while philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself, theology "deals with the meaning of being for us." (ST I, 22) Both are concerned with being but they differ in attitude and sources. The philosopher is detached in attitude and finds the source of his conclusions in reality as a whole and its Logos structure. The theologian is existentially involved and finds the basis of his thought "where that which concerns him ultimately is manifest." (ST I, 23) The philosopher's purpose is to provide an answer in order to understand; the theologian's, an answer that heals and redeems. The complexity of the relationship between the two in Tillich's thought is rooted in the many purposes he carries into his analysis. He seeks to avoid a conflict by giving them separate roles, yet denies the possibility of a synthesis between them, by insisting on their qualitative differences. He wants to allow for the independence of each whereby neither will find a basis for the inclusion of the other in itself but he insists on affirming their convergence in man's ultimate concern, with Being. His aim is to advance beyond the contemporary conflict between the two, not by returning to a former structure that makes either subservient, but by establishing a system in which they can complement one another. Our question is what happens to the participation concept in all of this complexity? Is it a philosophical concept or a theological symbol? It is used on both sides of Tillich's boundary of thought. Does it have one meaning in the philosophical configuration and another in the theological? Or is that boundary too unclear for such an attempted analysis?

James Luther Adams finds this to be the case. J. Heywood Thomas believes Tillich argues falsely, by means of definition, in claiming that every philosopher's existence is essentially a religious matter and that each is a crypto-theologian in that he cannot escape from the special community which mediates the Logos to him.[3] At this point Tillich appears to be saying that the philosopher can properly fulfill his function only when he becomes no longer a crypto- but an acknowledged theologian. Tillich is here transgressing one of his boundaries, which seeks to affirm the autonomous function of philosophy. He is led to this transgression by his desire to disclose and emphasize the fact that every man is religious in the sense of having an ultimate concern. He might have said more simply that the philosopher, too, is hiddenly or openly a religious man, though not necessarily a theologian. There is a distinction between being committed religiously to a community with its world-view and taking the Ultimate as the starting-point of life and thought. In the first instance, religiously, the ultimacy is a quality of one's concern and the emphasis is on the depth and pervasiveness of that concern. The concern could be ultimately for that which is not ultimate. In the second instance, the emphasis is on the Ultimate and the exclusiveness with which one is really concerned with the Ultimate alone.

Apart from this transgression of the boundary, however, the relationship between philosophy and theology in Tillich's thought seems, however complex, to be clear. Philosophy elaborates its understandings from the context of human existence and reality as it is known, while theology begins beyond the reality-structure that presents itself in historical traditions, finding its point of departure in revelation. Theology has a kerygmatic element; philosophy a scientific. Philosophy deals with meanings of reality that are contiguous with the structures of the human mind, its reason, in relation to the universal structure of Logos. Theology discloses meanings that are transcendent over reality as it is ordinarily known, that summon the human mind to ecstasy not to destroy its structures but to open them to their depth. The philosopher finds that he speaks of his ultimate concern in terms of a question; the structure of reality takes the form of questions for him. Man is his own question and, at the same time, the center in which the question of being is raised. The philosopher creatively grasps and shapes the question, uncovering it in the contents of his culture - what does it mean, to be? What James Luther Adams, then, sees as a change in Tillich's view of the relationship between philosophy and theology is more accurately to be described as a development. In his early writings, he portrayed philosophy as dealing with the principles of meaning. The change, according to Adams,[4] is that in his later writings, philosophy's place came to be the examining of categories of thought and being and raising the ultimate questions, to which theology gives the answers. Actually, the meaning philosophy discovers in human existence is that man's nature and purpose is to ask the questions. He is the door to the deeper levels of reality. The door is hinged on his questions.

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[3] J.H. Thomas, op. cit., p. 42

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[4] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.260

The theologian needs philosophy in that he can only speak meaningfully in terms of the questions just as he can only speak significantly in so far as his answers originate beyond them. But at the point of the theological answer, Tillich's method of correlation, by which philosophy and theology are set in their independent but complementary interplay, is carried to a new level. For "under the impact of God's answers" man asks further questions. (ST I, 61) There is an interpenetration and influence between questions, answers, and questions reformulated. The question of the contemporary situation is, according to Tillich, the search for New Being. Under the impact of the divine answer, a man must reformulate that question: am I ready for participation in it? Looking at the participation concept from the standpoint of this correlation, we must expect the term to have an overlay of philosophic and theological meanings which have some influence upon each other.

A very serious problem arises from Tillich's definition of philosophy in ontological terms: is he not tailoring philosophy to suit his system? Is this not a false correlation founded on an autonomy more pretended than real? Are there not significant schools of philosophy that cannot be included in this ontological definition? Does not the nominalist tradition deny the relevance of ontological terminology or any participation of any individual reality in anything beyond itself?

Tillich is, of course, fully aware of the fact that empiricists and positivists will not feel at home in the ontological setting he gives philosophy. He refuses, however, to bear the responsibility for the estrangement. He finds it difficult to understand how a school that has turned away from twenty-five centuries of philosophical development can justly claim to be included in any definition of what philosophy is. David Roberts commends Tillich for the manner in which he "solves the problem of nominalism," that the knower is "merely externally related" to the known.[5] The nominalist ontology which maintains that only the individual has reality and that universals are verbal signs pointing to similarities among individuals, is at the basis of empiricism and positivism though these, in their insistence that philosophy is concerned only with epistemological questions, do not recognize their ontological presuppositions. But pure nominalism is "untenable", for the empiricist must acknowledge that everything that can be known must have "the structure of 'being knowable'," a structure that includes a "mutual participation of the knower and the known. Radical nominalism is unable to make the process of knowledge understandable." (ST I, 177) Nominalist-oriented philosophies have an unresolvable epistemological problem and a hidden ontological assumption. They cannot evade the ontological questions because they represent "a view of reality as a whole." (BR, 17)

J. Heywood Thomas sees the difficulty elsewhere. It lies in "the confusion in Tillich's understanding of this fundamental concept in his philosophical theology, the concept of being."[6] Tillich has committed "a category mistake" in using the phrase "being-itself" as something "over and above particular beings." At this point, it must be Thomas who confuses the issue. Nowhere does Tillich speak of being-itself as "over and above" beings. If anything for Tillich, it is not an entity alongside of or beyond other entities. Thomas' critique betrays a nominalist variety of circular thinking. Nothing can be spoken of unless it is an entity alongside, above or apart from others; therefore, if one speaks of being-itself, it must be measurable, locatable and definable. Thomas uses the illustration:

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[5] David Roberts, in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.116
[6] J.H. Thomas, op. cit., p.36

> It is very like the man who, on being shown the Colleges of Cambridge, asks, 'But where is the University?'

On nominalist presuppositions, the university cannot be. Interestingly, Tillich when speaking at a dinner in his honor commemorating his seven-year tenure as University Professor at Harvard expressed his appreciation of what was to him an experienced fact, that Harvard was a university and had not become a multiversity. Faculties within it maintain dialogue on common concerns. The sense of the whole, the structure of being a university, with a common aim of learning in which each segment participated, imparted a reality to all.

The nominalism reflected in the empiricists and the realism reflected in Tillich force a choice: between an exclusive emphasis on individualization or a scheme that includes an appreciation of the unique character of the particular, the individual, within a view that also includes an understanding of how particulars can participate in reality as a whole. The more inclusive system can account for more dimensions of reality and meaning. Tillich's ontological reading of philosophy is not meant to exclude anyone. Nominalist-oriented positions are welcomed into dialogue, provided they are willingly aware of their presuppositions.

The question of being, then, is what does it mean that beings, individually, have being in common? What is the meaning of beings participating in being? If any relationship of one being to another is to be conceived possible, the participation must be more than verbal. "The element of participation guarantees the unity of a disrupted world and makes a universal system of relations possible." (ST I, 177) In The Courage to Be, Tillich parallels the description of participation we have examined earlier.[7] "Participation means 'taking part'" in the sense of sharing, methexis, and "being a part", as of a political movement. (CB, 88) Our question now is what kind of sharing is involved? Is the relation of beings to Being in Tillich's view a substantial one, that beings participate or share in the stuff of Being in order to be? Or are we to think of the relationship in causative terms, that beings participate in that which causes and enables them to be? And more basically, we must ask about the kind of ontological structure participation reflects in Tillich's thought. What enables us to speak of the being of beings? The question of being is the question of the Ground of being.

2. The Ground of Being

In the participation-ontology of Tillich, "every person and every thing participates in Being-itself, that is, in the ground and meaning of being. Without such participation it would not have the power of being." (ST I,118) Persons or things cannot be what they are, either independently in themselves or as parts of groups, communities or species, without that which is described by this curious word, participation.

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[7] pp.16-8 above.

Being-itself in Tillich's usage is not "pure Being" which is mixed, in greater or lesser degrees in things to give them their substantial character. The image is not that of a vast reservoir from which every reality takes what it requires or can absorb; it is rather one of the ultimate ground, the depth of all things. Being-itself is not a segment of reality that imparts reality to persons and things; rather, all reality is dependent on Being-itself, the ground in which all reality participates, without which it would not be.

Although "Being-itself" is an abstract term, that which it identifies is neither abstract nor static. The term itself, translating the ipsum esse of the medieval scholastics, is usable for its philosophical clarity but Tillich prefers "power of being" as more expressive of the actual character of Being-itself, which is not to be understood as the actus purus of Thomism. It may be argued that Tillich is mistaken in attributing a static character to the concept in Aquinas; in any case, neither term, ipsum esse nor actus purus, carries naturally the dynamic connotations required.

The dynamic character of Being-itself is the key to understanding it as the origin of that which is, on which realities are dependent. Were it a static concept, another factor would need to be introduced into the ontology as that which enables participation to occur. Being-itself as the power of being is the ground of the participations.

The relation of beings to Being-itself bears a dependence-modality on the side of beings and a transcendence-modality on the side of Being-itself. "The power of being must transcend everything that participates in it." (ST I, 231) It is the Beyond on which all that is depends. Being-itself stands in relation to beings, as the Unconditional stands in relation to the conditioned. In The Protestant Era, Tillich writes of the power "of something unconditional which manifests itself to us as the ground and judge of our existence." (PE, 163) Maintaining such a transcendent relationship, Being-itself or the ground of being is beyond the distinctions of essence and existence. "The ground of being cannot be found within the totality of beings, nor can the ground of essence and existence participate in the tensions and disruptions characteristic of the transition from essence to existence." (ST I, 205) Being-itself is beyond these contrasts.

But what can be said of this Ground other than that it is aboriginal and transcendent, and that things are by participation in it? What can be said of its nature and, thereby, of the character of that participation? In speaking of the ground of revelation, Tillich calls "Ground" a symbolic, not a categorical term. "It oscillates between cause and substance and transcends both of them." (ST I, 156) As he then elaborates the meaning of the concept in the ontological context, he more specifically questions the full appropriateness of both substance and causality as comprising the basic meaning of the Ground of being.

At least three difficulties plague any attempt to consider the ontological participation of beings in Being-itself in a substantial way.

First, the category of substance makes real change unintelligible. Differing attributes may give the appearance of change, but the substance is basically the same in a static system. (cf. ST I, 197)

Second, a substantial relationship between beings and Being-itself fails to account for the qualitative distance between creature and Creator. The Thomist system demonstrates the manner in which a substantial participation blurs the distinction drawn between the God who has aseity and creatures whose being is derived. The end result is a continuum of being between man and God. This leads to a third difficulty: in a substantial relationship between beings and their ground, the autonomy of beings is denied, along with the possibility of radical evil, a real rejection of the Originator by the originated.

On the other hand, the category of substance is implicit in any encounter or relationship in reality. A participation that is without substance is without meaning. The concept must include the category of substance but not be confined to its limitations.

Neither is causality as a category, entirely appropriate for the ground of being, according to Tillich. Christianity has preferred causality to substance because it avoids the pantheist difficulty by indicating the dependence of the world on God while maintaining his independence from it. (ST I,238) Josef Schmitz believes that Tillich errs in avoiding causality. An emphasis on causative participation would preserve the transcendence of God from the jeopardy into which it falls in Tillich's system, as Schmitz sees it. Schmitz defines the reason for the danger:

> Diese Gefahr ist bei einer Interpretation der biblischen Gotteslehre durch das ontologische Verhältnis von Sein und Seiendem immer dann gegeben, wenn Gott als das Sein-Selbst beziehungsweise als Grund des Seins, an dem alles Geschaffene partizipiert, verstanden wird und dieses Partizipationsverhältnis nicht durch den Schöpfungsgedanken, der ja gerade ein Kausalverhältnis im Unterschied zum allgemeineren Grund-Folge-Verhältnis in höchster Potenz besagt, differenziert wird. Durch solche Differenzierung allein könnte verhütet werden, dass das partizipierte Sein als rein immanenter Grund und das Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Schöpfung als gegenseitige Implikation verstanden wird, was immer zu einer pantheistischen Gottesvorstellung und zu einer Vergöttlichung des Seienden als solchen führt.[8]

For Schmitz, the causal relation between God and creation is essential.

The reason Tillich holds causality as failing to be an adequate category is that it does not actually allow the independence of the Creator that it pretends. Causes may be prior to but are bound by their effects. By referring to God as cause, one brings him into the endless chain of causes and effects without a transcendent point of reference above them. Further, the determinist scheme of cause and effect is theoretically impossible when it comes to understanding man, his nature and freedom. (ST I, 183) Causality must be included in the understanding of the Creator-creature relationship, but it cannot be the decisive category.

Tillich suggests that we can think of the relation of the Ground of being to beings more adequately in terms of a metaphor and a symbol theory. In Love, Power and Justice, where he asks if we can do nothing more, in talking of being, than elaborate its categories and polarities,

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[8] Josef Schmitz, op. cit. p.277

Tillich answers dialectically, No and Yes. Being cannot be defined for any definition would presuppose being. But "being can be characterized by concepts which depend on it but which point to it in a metaphorical way." (LPJ, 35) The metaphor he suggests has a history that spans Western thought from Aristotle to Nietzsche and Heidegger - Power. Being as the power of Being has the actuality but not the materiality of substance and the influence but not the limitation of cause. As he fills his ontological structure with existential meanings in The Courage to Be, Tillich speaks of the insight of Spinoza in seeing that self-affirmation is grounded in the divine self-affirmation. The individual soul shares in the divine power. "Perfect self-affirmation is not an isolated act which originates in the individual being but is participation in the universal or divine act of self-affirmation." (CB, 23) Every thing actualizes its highest good in self-affirmation, that is, in its power to be itself. In that self-affirmation it is not, however, operating in opposition to the ultimate purpose in things but on the contrary, this is precisely the purpose and meaning in things. In its sharing, in its full participation, is its power. We may know that in acts of courage we are affirming the power of being or we may not, but in either case, we participate in it. Courage is the "key to Being-itself." (CB, 181)

Tillich's elaboration of this power-ontology is often misunderstood. Lewis Ford is perplexed by it:

> Participation cannot be rendered precise within Tillich's framework. Finite beings participate in the Divine power of being; they also possess their own intrinsic power of

> being. But it is never completely clear whether these two concepts of the power of being differ only in degree (infinite power of being in contrast to finite power of being) or whether they radically and irreducibly differ in kind.[9]

The apparent ambiguity Ford finds in Tillich is rooted in a relationship that parallels in its complexity what Donald Baillie has called the "paradox of grace." The Christian acts, standing under grace, aware that it is not simply he who acts but God who is active in him. The dilemma for Tillich is resolved here in the principle of self-affirmation, as the principle in which the power of being is expressed. In affirming himself, the individual is in touch with the fundamental aim of being. Were there no element of his own involvement, it could not be self-affirmation. Were there no element of identity with the ultimate power of being, the self-affirmation would be superficial, self-destructive rather than affirmative in character because of isolation from its world and lack of participation. Ford's difficulty is that he uses the Thomist conception of participation, in substantial and causative categories, as normative. Tillich's thought cannot be confined to those terms.

In his ontology of power, Tillich can describe the relation of all things to Being-itself as a double one: they are transcended by it, infinitely, and yet participate in it. (ST I, 237) Being-itself, that is, the power of being, is both Ground and Abyss of beings. The creative nature of the power of being is the source of the participations of things; the abysmal nature points to the infinite manner of its transcendence over things.

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[9] L.S. Ford, The Ontological Foundations of Paul Tillich's Theory of Symbols, dissertation, Yale University, 1963, p. 120

Clearly, then, the participation of beings in the power of being is neither simply substantial nor causative. It transcends these categories. We see its true character when Tillich speaks of "Ground" as a symbol. The fact is that in the last analysis, we have here a symbolic participation, in the very particular sense Tillich gives that term. Its cogency we must examine later in detail. Here we can indicate its basis in the principle that in order to be something, one must mean something.

3. The Negation of Being

The ground of our being is that which "determines our being or not-being." (ST I, 21) It is his consciousness of the possibility of not-being that drives man to ask after the presence and character of being. We have noted that, for Tillich, the distinguishing feature of man is his ability to ask the question of being, his own and all being. That which impels him to ask that question is his capability "to look beyond the limits" of his being and "envisage nothingness." (ST I, 186) In order to be able to look at his being and ask about it, man must in some way separate himself from it. Such a separation is actual because "man participates not only in being but in non-being." (ST I,187) In speaking of beings as created, we imply that they might not have been created; in asking the question of being, we presuppose the actuality of non-being. And in understanding Being-itself through the metaphor of the power of being, we can discover the same presupposition. For power presupposes "...something over which it proves its power." (LPJ, 37) It is the power "which resists non-being." (ST II,11)

The theoretical necessity of coming to terms with non-being and man's relationship with it is matched by the existential demand. In courage a man may withstand the fear produced by an object because the object has a reality through which object and man share a common participation. Anxiety, however, is quite another matter. What makes it so trying for human courage is that it cannot be relegated to the influence of some object; it is rooted in nothing and bears the threat of non-being. (CB, 36) Non-being is the source of all the existential threats: against "man's ontic self-affirmation," in terms of fate and death; against "man's spiritual self-affirmation," in terms of emptiness and meaninglessness; against "man's moral self-affirmation," in terms of guilt and condemnation. (CB, 41) At these boundary-situations, before these existential threats, man becomes conscious of his participation in the power-of-being. (BR, 62) Any reflection on temporality as an essential element in human or natural existence again immediately posits the subject of non-being, for time is a movement from a past which is no-more, through a present which is, to a future which is not-yet. (ST I, 193) There can be no world, Tillich insists, without a dialectical participation of non-being in being. (ST I, 187)

Of course, Tillich is in the central Christian tradition, thinking in terms of the finitude of man. Ontologically, he defines that finitude in terms of non-being. Everything finite has a portion of non-being and participates in the "heritage of non-being." It is from non-being that things come, and toward it that they go. (ST I, 189) The ambiguity of existence is that it expresses being and contradicts it at the same time.

(ST I, 203) Tillich thinks of Plato as existentialist in point of view in that he maintained that man's existence in a transitory world contradicts his essential participation in the eternal world of Ideas. (CB, 127) Man's existence is lived in the twilight zone where being and non-being are mixed and intersect. Being-itself, in the Tillichian system, is beyond the contrast of essential and existential being; Being-itself does not participate in non-being. (ST I, 236)

The startling thing in Tillich's ontology, which gives a special caste to the participation concept, is that Tillich posits non-being within Being-itself, that is to say, the ultimate source of non-being is in God. He is able to do this by the power-of-being metaphor with its requirement of that over which its power is expressed. Standing behind him in the "heritage of non-being" tradition are Boehme, Schelling and Nietzsche. Boehme writes of "the contrariety and combat in the Being of all beings" and how out of the Nothingness in Being, Will arises.[10] Schelling believes that it is easier to explain the dynamic character of existence by positing an original contradiction which seeks to be overcome than a primal unity which really would have little reason to act. In his dissertation on Schelling, Tillich writes of the importance of non-being for his "Positive Philosophy":

> Schelling's significance in the history of philosophy can be seen directly in the comprehension of this notion, the crux philosophiae from Parmenides to Hegel. He determined positively and concretely in the irrational will the amphibolic character of what is not: it is the principle of freedom of God and man, it is the nought from which the world is created,

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[10] J. Boehme, op. cit., 2.1, p. 13

> and it is that which should not be, which constitutes the power of sin and error. Schelling's presentation of the first potency is an ontology of what is not.[11]

Nietzsche, in his parable of the madman in the town square calling for lanterns to be lighted in the morning asked, "Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?"[12] The threat of non-being provided the impetus for the will-to-power in his thought scheme.

Incorporating non-being into the very center of an ontology results in a dynamism that a methodical rationalism could not generate. James Luther Adams calls this tradition an "at times subterranean" line of Western thought, which views the world "not as a unified structure" but as one "constituting an interplay between form-creating and form-destroying processes."[13]

Others object to the crucial place non-being is awarded by Tillich. Robert C. Johnson claims that the consequence of this emphasis is a basically Hegelian understanding of sin as estrangement and separation which becomes the controlling motif rather than Biblical assertions.[14] However, Edward Farley demonstrates an important contrast between Tillich and Hegel. In the face of non-being and in the situation of estrangement, Tillich uses the participation term "to show that man continues in and for God in spite of his estrangement." This relationship differs from that in Hegel for whom estrangement never destroyed the saving efficacy of the natural development of the world-historical process.[15]

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[11] P. Tillich, Die religionsgeschichtliche Konstruktion in Schellings positiver Philosophie, Breslau: Fleischmann, 1910, pp.17-8

[12] F. Nietzsche, The Gay Science, 125 in Nietzsche: an Anthology, Manthey-Zorn, (ed.), New York: Washington Square, 1956, p.94

[13] J.L. Adams, op. cit. pp. 202-3

[14] R.C. Johnson, Authority in Protestant Theology, Philadelphia: Westminster, pp.119-20

[15] Edward Farley, op. cit. pp. 101-2, underscoring mine

Sin is not simply to be identified with non-being in Tillich, as estrangement is not to be labelled as inherently evil. Non-being may be the occasion and consequence of sin but there is another side to both non-being and estrangement. They are also part of the structure of freedom and human selfhood. Guyton B. Hammond writes of "the other side of alienation." Estrangement provides the situation in which man in his freedom can be justified in faith and reconciled with God. Estrangement, as symbolized in the Fall, may confront man with a terrible danger, but it also provides him with an unparalleled opportunity.

The amphibolic character of non-being is seen, then, from the human side as offering the occasion of life's great drama, its ultimate question and ultimate answer as well as confronting man with the ultimate threat. In the context of the doctrine of God, non-being is that which "makes God a living God" by its challenge to the power of his being. (CB, 180)

What type of participation is it that is involved in this dark side of Tillichian ontology? How do persons and things participate in non-being? Surely neither substantially nor causatively, for such relationships would require non-being to be a positive factor which would yield to contradiction. Participation in non-being must be understood similarly to participation in the power of being - symbolically.

4. Being's Microcosmic Expression

At every point in Tillich's analysis of being, it is clear that man is the being in whose nature the basic principles of being are refracted. Man is the being who is self-conscious of being. He can ask its question.

In his life the threat of non-being is confronted in its fullest force, and overcome. Man is "the door to the deeper levels of reality." (ST I, 62) Only in his existence can existence itself be approached. It is he who "experiences directly and immediately the structure of being and its elements." (ST I, 169) This central significance of anthropology in Tillich's ontological thought is decisive for his view of the concept of participation. The character of the ontological elements and hence of their relationship is to be understood in terms of persons rather than things. We have seen that the concept had its origins in the physical theories of the Greek medical writers. In Plato, the Forms or Ideas were elements of limit and participation the relationship that defined matter into actual entities. The ontological type of participation of beings in Being that was present as the other basic strand in the early and medieval use of the concept we saw was substantial in character. Participation was conceived in terms of reference drawn from the world of things, of objects in their definition and physical forces in their interaction. The concept was almost mechanistically understood. Now in the ontology of Tillich we discover a different orientation.

While there are "microcosmic qualities" in everything, man alone is microcosmos, for Tillich. (ST I, 176) This does not mean, of course, that the totality of cosmic reality is refracted in the individual. Man is microcosmic in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. (ST II, 121) This means that in man's existence the basic ontological structure in its primary elements, rather than the whole of reality, is present, visible, and determinative.

Tillich parallels Heidegger's concept of Being, where Being is known in terms of human Dasein, which is Being-in-the-world. Tillich's formulation is that the self-world polarity is the basic structure of being, in which everything participates in varying degress of approximation toward one or the other pole. It is not the entire world in which the self participates in the precise sense, but those sections of it that constitute the scope of its world-relationship. The self develops only in the context of a world - and a world is present fully only to a self. All beings have something corresponding to selfhood, in that each is centered and each has its participation in the power of being. But the more self-relatedness a being has, the more it is able to participate in its world without losing its identity. Indeed, identity can only be gained in reference to a world. Man participates, therefore, in the world of nature and, transcending nature, in community and its culture. (CB, 90-1)

Tillich's kinship with nature is one of the unique aspects of his thought in a philosophical and theological world that finds this curious. Probably this is a cause of his sense of affinity with Teilhard de Chardin.[16] The natural world and man participate mutually in one another. (STI, 261 and ST II, 43) Man cannot so transcend nature as to deny his participation in its life, and nature cannot so include man as to mitigate his distinctiveness. What is more, nature finds in man that reality toward which it is driven. The Spiritual and the Natural are not to be set in exclusion or opposition to one another. On the contrary, every cell of a man's body participates in his freedom and spirituality. The very "movements of the atoms in Shakespeare's body" participated in the spiritual acts that produced Hamlet. (GW IV, 123) Tillich finds this principle underscored by the Greek concept of arete, which combines both strength and value. (CB, 83) J.H. Randall, Jr., among others, is disturbed by Tillich's use of the microcosmic concept. Is Tillich following the early Heidegger in finding the structure of being in man, which is the method of idealism, or is he holding that "the structure of being is found by man in his encounters with the world" which is the ontology of "empirical naturalism"?[17] Apparently, Tillich is seeking a position that transcends both. The self-world ontological structure is consciously discovered only in encounter but it is discovered as a structure that has been implicit all along, at every level of being.

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[16] In the Introduction to ST III, Tillich writes of his pleasure in having read The Phenomenon of Man, indicating a large measure of agreement. cf. also The Future of Religions, p.91

Again, the character of this ontological participation in the self-world structure fits neither the category of substance nor that of causality while it includes both. Surely the substantial dimension is not negated. Man's participation includes materiality, the physical side of the world. Certainly, the causative relation is present. Man's awareness of being a self is dependent causatively upon having a world. But just as obviously, another dimension must be included. There is an element in man's self-world participation that cannot be accounted for by the objectivity of the material world and that element is crucial: it is meaning. A man's world means something to him, or it would not be his world. Again we are discovering a quality of participation here that we can only call, in Tillich's terms, symbolic.

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[17] J.H. Randall, Jr., in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.154

This interpretation is substantiated by the course of Tillich's thought when he comes to discuss spirit. His determining definition of the nature of Spirit is that of a unity of power and meaning. The element of power is present in centered personality, self-transcending vitality, and self-determination. Meaning is implicit in universal participation (that is, participation in one's world), the forms and structures of reality, and limiting destiny. (ST I, 249-50) Life as spirit includes mind, body, soul, etc. Here is mutual participation. But life as spirit is found only in man, where the structure of being, its self-world character, is fully realized. Were it not for the misleading connotation normally associated with the word, we might call this type of ontological participation spiritual, for its full reality consists precisely in including both the elements of power and meaning.

In a suggestive interpretation of Tillich's system, Guyton B. Hammond maintains that to account for the dynamic nature of Tillich's concepts, we must think of Being-itself as life. The self-world polarity, in Hammond's view, is rooted in the ability of being as life to transcend itself, to go out from itself.[18] Hammond carefully documents his theory, which is surely correct. What our discussion suggests here is simply this: that there is a reason why life seeks self-transcendence. In self-transcendence man seeks to discover and express the meaning that summons him in the structure of being.

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[18] Guyton B. Hammond, Man in Estrangement, op. cit., p.92

5. Elements in the Polarity of Being

The ontological structure of self and world, which expresses itself in terms of the subject-object dichotomy, has within it elements that stand in polarity over against each other. These include dynamics and form, and freedom and destiny, but the polarity that concerns us particularly is that of individualization and participation. These polar elements are present in beings at every level. They are most visible, and realized, in man.

What is clear from our analysis so far of the participation concept is confirmed by Tillich's treatment of this polarity. For Tillich, individualization and participation are not pure, unambiguous, terminal factors in the polar relation. We have observed that the participation concept consistently discloses itself in terms of two components, an element of identity and an element of separation. We would not expect the polarity of individualization and participation to comprise two factors totally incapable of mediation and inter-influence, an immoveable object planted at one extreme with the drawing power of an irresistible force at the other. Tillich asserts that participation is present on the level of complete individualization, in man, in its fullest intensity for every human being is unique because each can participate, as be believes the Stoics held, in the universal Logos or, as the Christian church proclaims, in salvation. (ST I, 175-6) The ontology of Leibniz confirms this interpretation of interdependence in that, as concerned as it is with preserving the individuality of the Monads - "...the influence of one monad upon another" in the view of Leibniz, "is purely ideal" - the ontology demands the broader context. Leibniz therefore maintains that "God alone is the primitive unity of the original simple substance; of which all created or derived monads are the products and are generated, so to speak, by continual fulgurations of the Divinity from moment to moment."[19] The task of individualization cannot be realized apart from the context of participation while the relationship of participation is impossible without individualized entities to comprise it.

Man is observed in his microcosmic nature again here in the tension of this polarity. Man's participation is obviously limited by the factors of his physical and cultural environment. Nevertheless, within the framework of these limitations, by becoming open to the structure of being, the rational structure of reality, man can participate universally in all things.

Again, not only is man seen as the microcosmos, he is the paradigm of beings. The elements of individualization and participation, which are in all things, reach their perfect forms in him in his personhood, on the one hand, and his communion, on the other. Communion is the fullest realization of the components and relationship that comprise participation - separation and identity in their inter-influence. The participations of other kinds of being are but anticipations of this one. "Communion is participation in another completely centered and completely individual self." (ST I, 176)

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[19] Leibniz, Monadology, #51 and #47, in Leibniz Selections, Wiener, (ed.), New York: Scribner's, 1951, pp.542-3. Tillich discusses this point in Leibniz' thought in CB, 115.

The doctrine of the individual's participation in the rational structure of reality is attributed by Tillich to the Stoics in their Logos theory. Generally speaking, this is surely correct, though Tillich's reading of "participation" into Stoic thought is inexact. As we have seen, the Stoics lacked the element of separation required by the participation concept.[20] Their doctrine more precisely was the identity of the structure of the human mind with the structure of reality in mutual rationality, a position with profound influence on Western thought. In the light of this identity, the Stoics recognized a basic human problem: men are in conflict with their own rationality. (cf. CB, 16)

The conflict threatens to destroy the relationship that makes life meaningful. In his finitude, as Tillich views him, man has the anxiety of losing this ontological structure. Finite self-hood is in dynamic tension with finite participation. The break of their unity becomes actual when self-relatedness becomes loneliness and communion is lost. (ST I, 199) The self that is cut off from participation in its world is an empty shell. Aseity belongs to God alone. When man seeks it, he is destroyed because the structure of his being disintegrates. (CB, 151-2)

Threatened with the loss of this structure, which is the threat of non-being, man is called upon to find the courage of self-affirmation which has two sides, the affirmation of the self as self and the affirmation of having a world, of participation in it, without which there could be no self. (CB, 86-7) In his attempts to cope with the anxieties generated by this threat, man seeks sources of that courage where they appear to be readily available. Thus, in "democratic conformism" man seeks to allay his anxieties by "the courage to be as a part" of the great, productive society, or as in Romantic individualism, he looks for "the courage to be as a self" without any obligations. (CB, 107,117) The tension can be broken in either direction. None of these sources of courage is fully adequate to sustain the person before the threats of death, meaninglessness, and guilt. The courage to be, as a self and a part, needs to be rooted in the ground and power of being.

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[20] pp. 29-30 above

The individualization-participation polarity is the most visible expression of the polarity within the polarities, which Tillich calls that between the element of the self-relatedness of being and that of the belongingness of being. (ST I, 165) These are implicit in the polarities of freedom and destiny and dynamics and form as well. All beings share in them, but only in man has self-relatedness the full depth of individualization and belongingness the full comprehensiveness of participation.

Again we wonder about this ontological participation in the polar elements: what is its character? We can expect it to be most clearly refracted in its highest level - in communion. Surely communion has all the actuality of substance, though not confined to this category, and all the influence of causality, though not limited to this one. The clue is in that factor that transforms an encounter between two persons into a communion. The factor again is meaning. The ontological participation in the polarity of being retains the consistently symbolic character.

6. The Analogy of Being

Among the questions Tillich raises in Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality, is that which asks if there is not a basic incompatibility between an ontology and biblical religion because the religious background of the former is a "mystical participation" while the latter presupposes a distance between God and man as a religion of ethical command and obedience. (BR, 47) Does not a creation doctrine with an implication of the radical gulf between Creator and created deny the possibility of any participation of the one in the Other? From its publication, Tillich was deeply impressed by Rudolf Otto's classic phenomenological description of encounter with God in The Idea of the Holy. He finds it decisive for his thought. But in an early review of the work and since, Tillich has made one criticism. The God who is only "Wholly Other" could not be acknowledged by us as God; in fact, we could not encounter a Reality with whom we did not share some point of identity. Although man is in actuality separated from the infinite, he could not be aware of it, did he not participate in it potentially. (ST II, 9) The element of identity on which mysticism is based cannot be absent from any religious experience. (CB, 160) What gives the real force to the experience of God as Wholly Other is that we recognize him as Basically Same. The anthropomorphisms of biblical religion are symbols of this very element of identity.

Once this is said, it is necessary to re-assert the other side of the divine-human relationship. An emphasis on identity has serious dangers.

Religion can deteriorate into magic, as it often has, when men seek to participate in divine power so as to manipulate it for human purposes. (ST I, 213) The absolute dimension of the divine ethical demands can be mitigated and the divine transcendence dissolved so that God becomes just another entity in existence, a subject subservient to the subject-object dichotomy. A wrong stress on identity can lead to the misguided notion that God's existence can be proved by deduction from the factors of existence as it is known, making God dependent on the constructions of human thought, against which Tillich strongly protests, as did Kierkegaard before him.

In the complexity of Tillich's analysis, there is an insistence on the via negativa and room for the via positiva. Man is an individual person, who participates universally. He is dynamic, self-transcending, free, participating in a destiny. He naturally sees the divine life in terms of his own - personal, dynamic, and free. But the religious mind recognizes the meaning of the symbols on the other side of the polarity. If God has the distinctiveness of being personal, he is One who is at the same time an absolute participant. If he is dynamic, he is so in union with form; if free, he is united with his destiny. (ST I, 243-4) There is both ontological continuity and discontinuity between man and God. Both participate in the elements of the structure of being, but in absolutely different ways. Both participate in space, but God's participation is transcendent, as indicated by the symbol of omnipresence. Both know, but our knowing experience has a fragmentary character, while

God is truth, as indicated by the symbol of divine omniscience. (ST I, 277-9) The dialectical complexity of Tillich's doctrine is made possible by his use of Schelling's principle of identity. On this basis, Tillich can appreciate an identity in God that includes diversity and an identity between God and man that includes difference. In either Schelling's statement of identity as a logical principle or as a predication of the Absolute, identity is not to be confused with uniformity. In his second dissertation on Schelling, Tillich describes his view:

> Aber Identität ist nicht gleich Einerleiheit. Wäre das Absolute Einerleiheit, so könnte es nicht Identität genannt werden. Identität setzt Duplizität voraus. Das Absolute ist Identität, das heisst: Das Absolute als Subjekt ist gleich dem Absoluten als Objekt. (FH, 59)

The structural principle that is consequently behind Tillich's view of the God-man relation is the classic analogia entis, although in his system it has a post-Barthian, or more exactly, post-Reformation character. In the classic view, as we find it in Aquinas, the analogical relationship between creatures and their Creator is an alternative to the equivocity and univocity of medieval scholastic controversy. The type of analogy involved was, it must be noted, two-term rather than three-term. It was not that God and man were analogous since both had being, as a man and a horse would be analogous because of a common animal nature. Rather, for Aquinas, as one commentator puts it, in things described analogically "the common notion signified by the name is not shared equally by all the things which receive the name; only one of the analogates is signified perfectly..." The name "Being" can only signify God in perfection.[21] One of the analogates is in essence what the other is by participation. Aquinas writes: "The creature is not said to be similar to God as though God participated in the same form which the creature shared. Rather, the reason is that God is the very form substantially, while the creature participates in this form through a kind of imitation."[22] The doctrine of analogy in Aquinas involves the same substantial and causative dynamics as does the participation concept.

From Tillich's perspectives, two basic difficulties keep us from using the doctrine of the analogia entis in its traditional, classic form. The first is that it suggests the possibility of a natural theology, founded on inductions from nature and human experience which, by projection, refer to God. The consequence cannot be tolerated: either in medieval or nineteenth century (Ritschlian) formulations, natural and human experience sets the terms of reference in which God is understood. With Barth, with Luther and with Calvin, Tillich insists that revelation cannot be confined to terms drawn from the processes of human knowledge. That is the protest of the Protestant principle.

The second basic difficulty lies in the substantial and causative categories employed in the traditional doctrine. We have seen that consistently Tillich has sought to include but transcend these categories which wrongly draw God into the structure of existence, making him an object among objects and a cause among causes. He is the "First" in the classical explanation, to be sure, but he is nevertheless subjected to principles more inclusive than himself.

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[21] Ralph M. McInerny, The Logic of Analogy: an Interpretation of St. Thomas Aquinas, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1961, p.76

[22] St. Thomas Aquinas, De. Ver. 9.36

How then does Tillich reformulate the analogia entis doctrine? The key principle may be found in the opening chapter of Calvin's Institutes. Calvin speaks there of the connection between the knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of God:

> The knowledge of ourselves, therefore, is not only an incitement to seek after God, but likewise a considerable assistance towards finding him. On the other hand, it is plain that no man can arrive at the true knowledge of himself, without having first contemplated the divine character, and then descended to the consideration of his own.[23]

Calvin insists that a man cannot arrive at an understanding of God's being through an analysis of his own being but rather by a dialectical process in which the crucial point is that man comes to understand his own being only in the light of God's. The analogy is not one of natural continuity but of divine disclosure and grace. It becomes the basis neither of a natural theology after the Thomist pattern nor of a fideism following Barth, but of correlation. We can speak of God not literally but symbolically, according to Tillich. (ST I, 131,239-40) The principle of analogy forms the basis of a participation that is, again, symbolic.

In his treatment of the classical doctrine, Tillich thus includes the Barthian critique of any natural knowledge of God while resolutely standing against Barth's early rejection of analogia entis. In 1941, Tillich spelled out his position with clarity:

> But while accepting the method of analogia entis, I cannot accept any attempt to use it in the way of rational construc-

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[23] John Calvin, Institutes, op. cit., I,I.1-2, p.48. Tillich cites this passage in one of his rare footnotes in ST I, 63.

> tion. The symbolic, affirmative concepts about God, his qualities and his actions, express the concrete form in which the mysterious ground and abyss of being has become manifest to a being as his ultimate concern in an act which we call "revelation." The special symbols are dependent upon the concrete situation and configuration in which the mystery of the ground appears to us. The knowledge about God arising from such a concrete manifestation of the unconditioned is true, although it may be a relative, preliminary or distorted truth. But it is not theoretical, it is an existential truth, that is a truth to which I must surrender in order to experience it. In this sense the "symbols provide no objective knowledge but yet a true awareness", namely, the mystery of the ground, which never can become an object for a subject, but which draws the subject into the object thus overcoming the cleavage between them.[24]

While man's being is analogous to God's, in the Thomist two-term analogical way, a man does not know truly who and what he is until he knows God, his ultimate concern, the ground and mystery, in revelation. When he knows God he knows he is God's. He knows then not only his being but the meaning of his being. He participates in the being of God now at another level and with a new fullness. Thus Tillich can say, when a man discovers God, he discovers himself, infinitely transcended. (TC, 10)

The hope of eternal life is a paradigm case of the manner in which Tillich's dialectical understanding of the God-man relationship works out. That hope is based not on a substantial quality of a man's soul but on his participation, by grace, in the eternity of the divine life. (ST I, 276) The classical doctrine of analogy is thus, along with the classical concept of participation, reformulated in the light of the prophetic-Protestant principle.

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[24] Paul Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge" in Journal of Liberal Religion, v.3, 1941, p.203, cited in J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.271

7. The Transcendent Being of God

Tillich's doctrine of God has a special bearing on his view of the character of participation in its ontological application. It brings the issues we have been examining into focus, and provides the setting for a use of the concept that is unique in its history. The central issue is defined by Tillich as the conflict between the personal nature of the biblical understanding of God and the ontological principles involved in the statement that God is Being-itself. In the biblical understanding, God is personal. (BR, 23-4) But ontology raises a radical question: is not a personal God a being among others who cannot be the object of ultimate concern? (BR, 27-8) God as a subject, even a transcendent subject, cannot be free from the limits of the ontological structure. He must be interpreted in the light of a higher principle, as Kant saw in positing the question God must ask himself - why am I? In that case, he would not be ultimate. Tillich sees the conflict between the personal reciprocity of the I-Thou relation and ontological participation beginning in the Bible itself. (BR, 82) This is the problem that has troubled Nels F.S. Ferré more than any other in Tillich's theology. Ferré believes that the personal God, necessary to the biblical understanding of revelation, salvation and the act of prayer, is eliminated by Tillich's ontological assumptions. Tillich meanwhile has insisted that the God concept and ontological considerations are interdependent and require each other.

Tillich's statement is that God is not a person but is personal, if that qualification is applied carefully. God is the ground of the personal. (ST I, 245) Being includes personal being; God is the "Personal-itself." (BR, 83) Guyton B. Hammond has defended Tillich against the charge that his concept of God is static and lifeless. He has developed the position that Tillich's ontology is actually "derived from and constructed upon the experiences of selfhood and self-consciousness, understood as self-transcendence."[25] Under close investigation, he finds the term Being-itself means Life-itself. Hammond's argument, however, does not necessarily lead to the conclusion he tries to establish, that there is an ultimate place for the divine-human encounter as a person-to-Person encounter in Tillich's scheme. The concept "Life" need not be interpreted personally. Tillich himself has stated that the attribution of life to God is symbolic, for God's life is not subject to the terms of reference of existential life.

Tillich's talk of "the God above God" adds weight to the suspicion that any personal God who finds a place in Tillich's doctrine is but an accommodation of the real God to the limitations of human knowledge and experience. Further, Tillich quite clearly underscores his view that God cannot be called a self, for that concept implies "separation from and contrast to everything which is not self." (ST I, 245) We need ask what "personal" can mean if selfhood is prohibited? Tillich asserts that a "pantheistic element" is necessary in the Christian doctrine of God. (ST I, 234) The issue is, if God is not a person, how can the pantheistic element be kept from dominating the doctrine, as we have seen George F. McLean and Josef Schmitz, among others, insist it does in Tillich's thought?

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[25] G.B. Hammond, "Tillich on the Personal God", in Journal of Religion, v. 44, 1964, p.292

The manner in which this dilemma is resolved in Tillich's mind can be seen characteristically from two sides: the perspectives of ontological structure and human experience. Ontologically, God includes, fulfills and transcends the elements in the structure of being. In him, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny are united. Similarly, in a kind of coincidentia oppositorum, God can be called "the absolute individual" on condition that he is also "the absolute participant." This is a unique ontological application of the participation concept. In the history of the term, it has always faced in the other direction. The "lower" participates in the "higher", sensible objects in ideal forms, beings in being-itself. The Boethian formula has been consistently followed, that beings participate in Being-itself but Being-itself does not participate in anything. The partial exception is in Schleiermacher, who speaks of Christianity's mediator as participating in both "Divine Essence" and human nature. Tillich goes further; he completely inverts the tradition. Being-itself does participate. It participates universally - in everything. "God is not God without universal participation." (ST I, 245) The divine life participates in every life as its creative ground and aim. God has community with everything; he shares its destiny. From his parousia nothing is fully separated. This is not to be thought of as a spatial or temporal presence. It is symbolic, but no less real.

Tillich has insisted that the individualization-participation polarity in human life demands an interdependence of the two elements. The individual is not truly a self unless he is a participant, and only selves can truly participate. Under the conditions of human existence, however, these realizations are fragmentary. The polarities are always in tension. To be a person involves them both but is an unachieved ideal. In the divine life, on the other hand, the two elements are fulfilled in each other. God can be understood as Absolute Person because he has all the depth and intensity of the Absolute Individual (as with the One of Plotinus) as well as the comprehensiveness and involvement of the Absolute Participant. God is not a self but is centered. In him, the centeredness that is part of the structure in which all things participate, is fulfilled - by its utter, infinite inclusiveness. All things can be included in God, for in his agape all things can be affirmed in themselves. Tillich's ontological answer to pantheism is pan-en-theism. (ST III, 421)

Human experience discloses a similar transcendence. When the individual relates himself to the ground of being, his experience is dominated by the participation side of the polarity and has a mystical character, according to Tillich. When he finds himself in the divine-human encounter, his experience has a personal character. In faith, both are accepted and transcended. (CB, 156-7) Absolute faith goes beyond the subject-object condition of personal encounter as well as beyond mystical experience. An element of skepticism within it transcends mystical identity while the awareness of God as beyond the subject-object scheme carries it beyond personalism. (CB,177) Ontology demands and faith experiences the transcendent God.

Now it is easy to understand how a personalistic faith can be "transcended" by a mystical element, by mystical union with the Ground which is Beyond. But what can "transcend" an experience of mystical union? From the perspective of Neo-Platonic philosophy or Oriental religion, nothing can. But in the context of biblical faith, there is another possibility. The faith-situation transcends the mystical union which swallows selfhood and submerges as well as devalues human reality and experience. The faith-situation fulfills selfhood, heals rather than erases the tensions of human existence, and places a sacramental valuation on the objects and experiences of this world. In the encounter with the God above God, as Tillich describes it, the self receives itself back. (CB, 187-8) The transcendent human experience is that in which the Divine Spirit is present in the human spirit, in which the human spirit participates in the Divine, finding there its ground and aim.

What Tillich has done in his doctrine of God, though his ways are sometimes obscure, is to elevate the person-hood of God to a transcendent level. While profoundly aware of the depth of the personal, as his writings relating to depth psychology show, he is always sensitive to the dangers of a personalism that can easily sever the self from real relationship with others as well as with non-personal reality, cutting itself off from reality as a whole and diminishing God to a being in a largely alien universe. The answer to Ferré's critique is that the ultimate affirmation about God is not that he is Person but that he is Spirit. Ferré expresses satisfaction in what he calls Tillich's "switch" to Spirit in the third volume of the Systematic Theology.[26] Perhaps we find here not a switch as much as a fulfillment. All along, Spirit is the determining category for the nature of God. Strategically, Tillich's system had to begin with ontological concepts, however, for to have begun with Spirit would have had even greater dangers. Spirit, in its popular contrast with body or matter, is as misleading as Being-itself. From the beginning of Tillich's system, his stress has been on power and meaning, which in their unity comprise Spirit. The concepts of the earlier volumes prepare for those of the last. The answer to Arnold Come's charge that in Tillich the participation concept swallows personal communion is twofold. First, while communion is the highest form of participation, it cannot be the most comprehensive. If God be God, he must be present to all aspects of created reality, able to make any of them sacramental. Even the hairs on each head are divinely numbered. Second, the fact that communion is the "highest" expression of participation in Tillich indicates that consistently his ontology is determined by human and personal rather than natural factors. The swallowing that occurs in this usage of the participation formula, if any, consists of the ontological being taken into the personal.

In the context of the doctrine of God, again, Tillich's concept of participation includes but transcends the substantial and causative categories. Participation is again in this setting, nothing less than symbolic. For participation in its highest ontological form is participation in the Divine Spirit, a union of power and meaning. To the analysis of our knowledge of the meanings of things we must now turn.

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[26] Nels F.S. Ferré, op. cit., p.16

CHAPTER THREE

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE KNOWER IN THE KNOWN

The participation concept can be seen with new facets of significance in a second constellation of ideas and principles in Tillich's thought: his analysis of cognition. "I believe that in every cognitive relation an element of participation is involved," he writes in his response to the interpretation and critiques included in Kegley and Bretall's symposium on his theology.[1] In many contexts, he insists that the knower participates in that which he knows. Writing in 1952, he reveals that the question of cognitive participation is "a problem which has come only recently into the foreground of my thinking." Nevertheless, Tillich had been thinking through the concerns of epistemology and its broader settings for a number of years in a way that implied the participation concept and its constituent elements.[2] In 1955, Tillich published an article on "Participation and Knowledge" which he characterized as "an initial approach" to the problems of an "ontology of cognition."[3]

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[1] Paul Tillich, "Reply..." in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.332

[2] Ibid. Cornelius Loew, Tillich's graduate assistant when *Systematic Theology I* was published, recalls, in a letter, a conversation with Tillich in 1948-9 about cognitive participation in which Tillich spoke of his interest in developing this more fully. Frau Gertraut Stöber, director of the Kreis der Freunde Paul Tillichs E.V., confirms the fact, in a letter, that "Partizipation" is not to be found in Tillich's earlier writings. She writes: "Insofern also stimmt Ihre Vermutung, dass dieser Begriff erst um 1948 auftaucht." "Teilnahme" does appear occasionally in writings before that date.

[3] Paul Tillich, "Participation and Knowledge" in *Sociologica: Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie*, Band I, T.W. Adorno and Walter Dirks, (eds.), zum 60. Geburtstag Max Horkheimer, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1955. The article deserves wider attention. It is cited hereafter as PK.

Tillich's point of departure in man as the asker of the question of being makes possible two starting-points for his theological system or an analysis of it. Introducing his Systematic Theology, he discusses the virtues and liabilities of beginning with either the ontological or epistemological sections. The justification of analyzing the problems of knowing first, as he did, was that it had become the tradition in modern times to ask as the first question, how do we know? How does man know about being in order to ask, and believe he can find an answer to, its question? A preference for an initial approach to ontology, on the other hand, can be based on the recognition that every epistemological method has ontological presuppositions. The question behind any epistemology is what is the structure of being that makes asking possible? For our purposes, we might have begun from either side, for participation is the key to both. Having chosen to look at the ontological constellation first because participation is generally identified, historically, as a term with a predominantly ontological application, we now turn to cognition. Our quandary is simple: does participation take on a different meaning in this different context? Will it continue to have both elements of separation and identity? Will it best be understood in a symbolic way, transcending but including the categories of substance and causality? Or is cognitive participation appreciably different from its ontological counterpart?

When Tillich writes of the human search for the "really real," he is describing the driving power within the human search for knowledge.

(BR, 12-3) As soon as the human concern is defined in this way, the dialectical nature of man's relationship with the real is evident. Did we not participate in the really real, we would not be able to know enough of it to seek it; were we not separated from it, had we not lost it, we would have no cause to attempt to find it. Then let us suppose that we come to that moment in which the "really real" opens itself to us; what then? Do we not surrender to it, seeking a participation in a new intensity and power? For Tillich, the search for the really real is the factor that draws together the many forms of cognition into one search for knowledge. The dynamic dialectic is at the heart of the process.

In comprehending the place of participation in Tillich's "ontology of cognition", we will need to examine the various kinds of human knowledge, their ontological presuppositions, the total ontological framework which acts of knowing disclose as their basis, the setting of knowledge in the _kairos_, its foundation in the _Logos_, and the nature of the identity of thought and being. An investigation of the place of participation in the verification process will complete our view of this constellation in Tillich's system.

1. The Kinds of Knowing

Man is one who knows, who knows that he knows - and that he does not know. His knowledge is of several kinds, and it is Tillich's desire, in his theory of cognition, to "roll up the iron curtain" between them. (PK,209) Tillich's first full-sized book after World War I was on _Das System der Wissenschaften_, with the intention of describing the place of each science in relationship to others and a larger whole. He had already become convinced that "a system of the sciences is not only the goal but also the starting point of all knowledge." If one is to develop a critical understanding of scientific knowledge, he must be aware "of the scientist's place in the totality of knowledge." Indeed, it is as important for the scientist as for the theologian or philosopher to have a sense of the connection between his work and the entire cognitive task.[4]

Adams finds the origins of Tillich's classification of the kinds of knowing in Fichte's "idea of knowledge" in its tripartite division. Different types of knowledge are appropriate for the various elements of reality: in the realm of thought, the science of philosophy; in that of existence, empirical science; in that of spirit, cultural science.[5] Within these basic divisions Tillich classifies the various sciences, from biology to history.

Writing some thirty years later, Tillich refers to Max Scheler's distinction between Heilswissen, Bildungswissen, and Herrschaftswissen as three types of knowledge, saving knowledge, educational knowledge and controlling knowledge. Conflating the second kind with the first, as the two share a common aim, Tillich describes a polarity between the existential type of knowledge at one end of the scale and the controlling type at the other. (PK,204) The existential label supersedes "receiving knowledge" as described in the first volume of his Systematics, being without the misleading passive connotations of "receiving." (cf. ST I, 97-8)

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[4] In German in FH, p.111; English translation in Adams, J.L., op. cit. p.121

[5] J.L. Adams, op. cit. pp.132-3

Controlling knowledge results from the scientific method. It makes of its object a conditioned and calculable thing. The term "controlling" indicates the inner connection between scientific discovery and technical application. The scientific method is one that discovers knowledge by controlled experimentation. Its natural expression is the increasing control over the elements of the environment.

All levels of reality, however, do not yield themselves to this kind of control. Some realms of knowledge require a method other than that of objectification, a method more appropriate to their natures. Furthermore, nothing can be completely objectified, for all things,insofar as they participate in the structure of being, have a self-relatedness that makes them more than simply "objects." Things are "interesting" in their self-relatedness. A metal is interesting in this way and in view of the things that can be produced from it, the tools and materials. But its self-relatedness, while being capable of extension, development or transformation, is not to be utterly violated without its actual destruction. Scientific knowledge is controlling knowledge, which maintains an element of detachment and is distinguished from immediate knowledge, but it is not pure objectification.[6]

Existential knowledge, at the other pole, has multiple forms. Tillich distinguishes the existential attitude from philosophical or artistic existentialism, defining it as basically "participating in a situation, especially a cognitive situation, with the whole of one's existence." (CB,124) In every cognitive act there remains an element of detachment; otherwise one would not know that which is other than oneself. Detachment is one element within the embracing act of cognitive participation. But in existential knowledge the element of participation or involvement is dominant.

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[6] Ibid. p.126

That is not to say that participation is absent from controlling knowledge. As we have seen, Tillich insists that anything that is known participates in "being knowable." Every reality participates in the structure of being, in self-relatedness. Such participation points to a basic correlation between knower and known which makes knowing possible. Another participation is the basis of the knowing act itself. Both object and subject are involved in bringing what is required to a moment of consciousness in which a phenomenon is known. In the realm of controlling knowledge, these participations are not always self-evident.

In existential knowledge, however, they are increasingly clear. The knowledge of persons, history, spiritual creation as well as religious knowledge all have this existential character. A person is not simply to be known - he is to be understood. Words used for understanding show an awareness of the participation element: ver-stehen and comprehendere. The two components of understanding are both participative, empathy and interpretation.

Empathy is essential to knowledge of persons. Tillich writes: "One of the consequences of the predominance of the principle of separation in modern theories of knowledge has been that man has tried to describe his understanding of others as an inference from his understanding of himself." Actually, either the understanding of oneself or of others is secondary. "The primary phenomenon is the understanding of the situation of encounter in which both oneself and others participate... Participation precedes objectivation." (PK, 205-6) The human reality is to be understood not in isolation nor in objectification but in meeting. When knowledge of another becomes controlling, the communion of existential understanding is broken.

In relation to oneself, it is again not a controlling knowledge but a participative one that provides the insight which heals, as in depth psychology. The person is not detached from his own past but rather that past is reactivated and he participates in it. Nevertheless, here again an element of detachment is required. "Insight" can become distorted into a fanatical self-assurance and understanding of others into wishful thinking. Elements of separation, detachment and verification are needed to protect against distortions. Tillich concludes that what is required for a proper understanding of persons is "right participation":

> Here the cognitive criterion coincides with the ethical criterion: true knowledge of the other person is possible only to the degree in which the relation to him is neither blinding passion nor beautifying wish nor distorting hate but rather a criticizing and accepting agape which is detached and involved at the same time. (PK,206)

A similar relationship to oneself is the basis for insight. A lack of such an emphasis on participation in the process of knowing has been a major factor in the de-humanization of man in contemporary society. (ST I,99) Participation has a shaping and transforming effect, a fulfilling consequence, for the result is "a participating knowledge which changes both the knower and the known in the very act of loving knowledge." (ST III, 137)

The interpretative side of understanding relates especially to the cultural sciences. The prefix inter points to the participative factor, that one must be "between" in order to understand. To understand and interpret a painting, Tillich maintains, the viewer must be taken into it, be deeply grasped by it, and live in it. "I recognize, in this moment in which I am emotionally moved, a dimension of reality of which otherwise I would never be aware, and a dimension in myself would never be opened up except through participation in the painting." (Pers, 104) Only by an entry "inside" the painting, can this happen.

More objective material is usually present in philological interpretation but the participation element is just as necessary. The philological side of the interpretative act must follow the strictest hermeneutical rules. There is, however, another pole to every genuine interpretation, for a text becomes "meaningful only to the degree in which the creation of the past is taken (into) the present creativity of the interpreter or speaks more generally (to) the interpretative potentialities of the present period." (PK,207)* In the interpretation of history, the historian must participate in that which is the object of his research. The object is thus not simply distant or unchangeable. Creative understanding can transform the past, with its potential meanings becoming actual in present interpretation. Tillich uses the example of the manner in which every succeeding period, while separated from classical Greece, reinterprets it, discovering and actualizing potential meanings in new ways. All the cultural sciences are involved in a similar pattern of separation and participation.

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* "Into" and "in" here transposed.

This role of participation in cognition has been a point of emphasis with John Dewey as he analyzes the nature of human experience. A human being, according to Dewey, is participative, not simply ego-centric. He can put himself "at the standpoint of a situation in which two parties share." The nature of language is that it comprises a common inclusive undertaking which at least two different "centers of behavior" share.[7] A person can participate in the situations of an historic person. He "participates in the genesis of every experienced situation."[8] Tillich comments on Dewey's insistence that all knowledge be united with practical activity in the educational process in the course of a discussion of Marx, for whom the principle was even more basic. "We cannot know the truth about the human situation without existential participation in the social structure in which we are living. We cannot have truth outside the actuality of the human situation." (Pers, 189) Truths about human life are not to be deduced abstractly from a priori principles but are to be known in and through active involvement in the personal experiences (Dewey) and social structures (Marx) of human life.

In classifying the various types of knowledge, Tillich meticulously avoids subsuming religion under the more general heading of cultural sciences. The fact is that religious knowledge has a qualitatively different element, although while saying this, Tillich wants also to insist that it not be separated entirely from the other types.

This distinction within relationship is made possible by a special explication of the participation concept which Tillich employs at this point: a "total, person-centered participation which one might call cognitive commitment." (PK,208) The Greek term gnosis in its later development suggests what this means. Tillich identifies three meanings prevalent in the New Testament period: mystical union, sexual intercourse and a knowledge that is not episteme. The word carries the connotations of erotic and mystical surrender. Religion is the experience of ultimate concern. Religious knowledge will thus carry the dimension of ultimate commitment. "Participation within cognitive commitment means being grasped on a level of one's own reality and of reality generally which is not determined by the subject-object structure of finitude, but which underlies this structure." (PK,208) One is grasped by the ground of being, the power of being, by God. That does not mean that one surrenders to a highest being; rather, it means "the participation of the whole personality in that which transcends objectivity as well as subjectivity." (PK,209)

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[7] John Dewey, Experience and Nature, Chicago: Open Court, 1926, pp.177-8 and 188-9

[8] Ibid. p.246

With the transcendent thus described as the focus of religious knowledge, a serious question must be answered. How is knowledge possible of such transcendent being? What is left of separation, objectivity, and verification in this kind of encounter? Tillich's answer is that knowledge is subject to the categories of being, particularly to time. In religious knowledge, the moment of participation is present as well as the moment of separation. These make all knowledge possible. In the cognitive encounter there are moments of participation, the perceptive moments, as well as those of separation, the cognitive moments.

Since the "object" of religious knowledge is not an object, there is not a series of forms and expressions appropriate for it as for other realms of knowledge and reality. The Unconditioned stands at the center of metaphysics, which must use expressions from the scientific and aesthetic realms to express its perceptions. Religious knowledge uses conditioned forms but symbolically - it "intends" the Unconditioned.[9] Metaphysical expression is thus dialectical, with a No corresponding to every Yes, in order to point to a depth of reality in which the committed may participate but which he can never fully describe.

In many other contexts, Tillich underscores his view that cognitive participation is absolutely essential to religious knowledge. When he presents a phenomenological description of the divine, he insists that man's relation to the gods must be existential, in terms of "a participation which transcends both subjectivity and objectivity." It is impossible to speak of the gods in detachment: "Man can speak of the gods only on the basis of his relation to them." (ST I, 214) When he defines revelation as an event which must be received, insisting that it is not to be understood as a series of propositions but as a situation in which the divine Spirit grasps and moves the human spirit in mystery, miracle and ecstasy, Tillich again establishes the central place of cognitive participation: "Revelation, whether it is original or dependent, has revelatory power only for those who participate in it, who enter into the revelatory correlation." (ST I, 127) Ethically, he who is united with the will of God does not act out of compulsion but out of participation, without which "neither the knowledge of God nor the love of God is possible." (BR, 69) Epistemologically, when he shows how the scientific method fails in theology because the "object" of theology is not an object within scientific experience, discoverable by detached observations and conclusions drawn from them, Tillich maintains that that object "is found only in acts of surrender and participation." (ST I, 44)

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[9] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.162-4

It becomes very clear in Tillich's discussion of cognition that religious knowledge is not to be understood as an area of exception to the general rule of knowing by the scientific method. Rather, the empirical and experimental method is to be seen to have a role within an embracing view of knowledge by participation. Knowledge of any kind is a function of Geist, with the constituents of reason, passion, conviction, decision, creativity.[10] An approach to the meaningfulness of reality is inherent in every search for knowledge:

> All knowledge, even the most exact, the most subject to methodical technique, contains fundamental interpretations rooted neither in formal evidence nor in material probability, but in original views, in basic decisions. (IH,143-4)

The depth question of meaning stands behind every realm of cognition.

Cognitive participation is not without roots in both of the major traditions that comprise Western thought. For Socrates, the just man is the one who understands justice. The prophets experienced the revelatory events they understood and expressed, wearing yokes and walking barefoot. Paul maintained that the Spirit given by God enables one to understand God's gifts and thoughts. (I Cor. 2:11-2) The medieval mystics, on the basis of experienced religious reality, reflected that "He who is imbued with or illuminated by the Eternal or divine Light, and inflamed or consumed with Eternal or divine love, he is a godlike man and a partaker of the divine nature."[11] The driving force of the Reformation was again a kind of cognitive participation, in the assertion that the grace of God is known by the faith that accepts and trusts it. Kierkegaard's metaphor of the man who knows what it is to swim only by swimming and Schleiermacher's insistence that the cultured despisers of religion could not expect to comprehend it without participating in it, continue the tradition. Recent forms of personalism, such as Martin Buber's, which hold that only the man who has stood in an I-Thou relation can know what it is to be a person, reflect the same point.

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[10] Ibid. p.127

J.H. Randall, Jr., however, is among those who question Tillich's development of this theory. While willing to acknowledge the place of "union" with another personality as a necessary condition for an adequate knowledge of him, Randall doubts whether the relationship is required or possible in other kinds of knowledge. He wonders about "union with a text - even a religious text" or union between the nature of the historian and the period or battle or movement or economic system he is seeking to interpret.[12] Tillich's response is that participation in cultural or religious expressions means "realizing in one's self the meanings communicated, whether in agreement or disagreement."[13] The interpreter does not, obviously, unite with a text, but he must participate in its meaning, sense its threat or promise, its uninspired conformity or its distinctive power, its effects on those to whom it was addressed. Nor must the historian clothe himself in helmet, breastplate and gauntlet, bearing a lance, to interpret the Battle of Hastings, but he must participate in its significance, projecting himself into its setting in national and cultural life to grasp its impact as an event. To the degree in which religious texts or historical events impart insights to the interpreter or historian through such participation, they can carry new significance for understanding man and his world beyond their original boundaries. The way of participation "shapes the character of the knowledge itself" of an historical event or person - it is knowing from the inside. This knowing is possible because of the correlation of structures within the knower and the known.[14]

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[11] Theologica Germanica, xli, ed. T.S. Kepler, Cleveland: World, 1952, p.143

[12] In Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.149-50

[13] Ibid. p.332

Knowledge then, for Tillich, has its foundation as well as its aim, in a union between knower and known. It seeks to overcome the gap between subject and object, through detachment or separation and participation. It is fulfilling; it transforms and heals. (ST I, 94-5) It is preceded by participation, and realized within it.

While Heidegger and Sartre focus on the pre-reflexive consciousness that lies behind consciousness itself, Tillich is interested in the basic structure in which either can emerge. That structure is reflected in the participation relationship and makes phenomena and knowledge possible. Tillich claims his method

> ...need not assume that the mind gives its laws to nature.

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[14] Ibid.

> Nevertheless it cannot hold an epistemological realism to be true. It cannot assume that nature gives laws to the mind. It must assume that the principles of meaning to which consciousness submits itself in intellectual activity are at the same time the principles of meaning to which existence is subjected. It must assume that the meaning of existence is expressed in the meaning-oriented consciousness.[15]

In the meaning-conscious act of cognition, the meaning-structure of reality is present. The one participates in the other and makes knowledge possible.

2. The Ontological Presuppositions of Cognition

Whether Tillich begins from ontological considerations or from within his theory of cognition, he soon comes to insist that the act of knowing and an understanding of it have ontological presuppositions. Every theory of knowledge has an ontology at its core. Philosophy cannot be reduced to epistemology and ethics for the question of whether or not truths and values have a foundation in reality cannot be avoided. A stand on these issues is implicit in every position. Tillich agrees with Nicolai Hartmann that "the cognitive relationship, involving as it does the transcendent character of the relevant acts, is fundamentally an ontological relationship and moreover a real one."[16] For Tillich, reason, like everything else, participates in being and thus is subordinate to its structure. (ST I, 163)

We have seen that for Tillich man as the asker of the question of being is the "door to the deeper levels of reality." His cognitive acts are the means of opening that door. On the basis of the encounter with reality which precedes consciousness, Tillich posits the subject-object polarity as the essential characteristic of the structure of being. In every cognitive act, a knowing subject confronts a knowable object. But what is more, the nature of that encounter, when it reveals love at its core or expresses knowledge as its result, is explicable only in terms of a preceding polarity, not a preceding identity. Tillich rejects Spinoza and Schelling on this point, to preserve what he sees indicated as the basic structure. The *contra* root is in encounter; the *ob-jectum* is that which is thrown over against one. "Subject and object meet in the situation of knowledge." They both participate in a common situation though they are separate. (PK,202)

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[15] Religionsphilosophie, in FH,307, translated in Adams, op.cit.p.189

[16] N. Hartmann, New Ways of Ontology, trans. R.C.Kuhn, Chicago: Regnery, 1953, p.136

Nevertheless, Tillich is thinking in terms of a polarity, not a dualism. In a cognitive encounter, "subject and object must be open for each other." The knower and the known must be able to receive one another. When Leibniz rejected any openness among the monads he had to posit the theory of each being a world totality of its own. Tillich keeps the two elements in tension in the theory of cognition as well as in his ontology. While subject and object mutually participate and are open to each other, they remain separate and self-contained or "the structure of that which is known would be invaded and destroyed by the dynamics of the knower." (PK,203)

In cognitive acts, the self-world structure of being becomes visible. Man does not know unless he has a world over against him and the world is not known without a self. To have a world means to have more than an environment, for a world has a meaningful structure in that it bears a universal claim. Marcel has a sentence on this point:

> To the extent that he learns to speak, where these conditions (of love) are positive, the child participates in a kind of re-creation of the world.[17]

It is a new world, because it is the child's, and yet it is not entirely his own for the world is really given. It is re-created, for now that given world has a special meaning.

While not accepting Husserl's "bracketing of existence," Tillich agrees with the phenomenological attempt to analyze the structural presuppositions of experience. The difficulty with the phenomenological method is that it has no correctives to subjective decisions about what is to be intuited. Therefore, Tillich seeks to use the method within a larger structure of thought. But he does agree that "an irreducible though indefinite minimum of structural presuppositions of every cognitive encounter...are a genuine subject matter of phenomenological research." (PK,204)

In cognition, the structural components of participation are decisive. It is by participation in those components that knowledge is possible. Participation in the self-world relationship by both subjects and objects, participation in encounter and participation in being are the foundations on which Tillich's theory of knowledge is constructed. With its elements of identity and separation, participation is involved in all types of knowing, even the scientific. For not only is scientific knowledge grounded in participation in the subject-object encounter, but scientific curiosity, its driving force, is "the desire to participate in that which is real and which, by its reality, exerts an infinite attraction on that being who is able to encounter reality as reality." The scientist participates in that which has the power of being the "really real" and seeks the fulfillment that participation promises. (PK,205)

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[17] Gabriel Marcel, Problematic Man, trans. B. Thompson, New York: Herder and Herder, 1967, p.49

Another basic ontological principle must be mentioned here, although its examination is best postponed until later. Tillich speaks in many places of the prius of all knowing and truth as the identity of thought and being. Knowledge cannot have the character of truth unless the thought of the mind has an identity with the object that is known. Tillich has written, "I am an idealist if idealism means the assertion of the identity of thinking and being as the principle of truth." (IH,60) Whether or not that label is correct, we shall observe in the ensuing analysis.

3. The Framework of Knowing

According to Tillich, theological considerations do not require any specific epistemological method. Neither in discussing "theonomous philosophy" in 1927 nor in his systematics of 1951 does Tillich claim a preference for any of the four basic methods he reviews, idealist, realist, vitalist or monist.[18] The choice may be made on the basis of adequacy in resolving the epistemological problems themselves rather than of adaptability to an overarching theological system. Nevertheless, Tillich does demand that whatever method is used, the underlying presuppositions of all philosophy must be recognized.

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[18] Paul Tillich, "Christentum und Idealismus" in Theologische Blätter, VI, 1927 and ST I, 75-6

Philosophy deals with the principles of meaning. Its objective is not only to know an actuality as it is, but to discover what it means. Tillich writes in an early article, that "every life that goes beyond the immediacy of the purely biological, psychological and sociological is meaningful life." Self-transcendence is the key to the meaning of life. But if one existent actualizes and fulfills its meaning, what of the others? Is it the meaning of existence that all things become more than they are, or more precisely, actualize their potential? Or is the potential of many existents - in nature, for example - fulfilled in the self-transcendence of one of them - man? Or is the meaning in fact that there is no meaning, that self-transcendence is an illusion and that all that is to be done is to accept that fact? This meaning, again, in Tillich's view, reveals a self-transcendence, for in accepting a "meaningless" situation, man transcends it, as Sartre, in writing of No Exit demonstrates that there is at least this exit, that one can write about it. Thus Tillich goes on reflecting on meaning in life:

> ...In every meaning there lies the silent presupposition of the meaningfulness of the whole, the unity of all possible meanings, i.e., faith in the meaning of life itself... Meaning is always a system of meanings. (IH,221-2)

Any epistemological method is acceptable, as long as it is used within the framework of a larger method and principle. The principle is that of meaning; the method is "metalogical." Tillich coins this word "in analoger Bildung zu metaphysisch." (FH,122) Its purpose is to unite the logical forms of actualities with their dynamic import: it is "logical to suit the thought forms, metalogical to suit the actual meaning or import."[19] This transcending, embracing method has two elements, related to each other in polarity: the phenomenological and the dynamic-critical. The phenomenological side seeks to intuit the essences in things, their fullness and completeness, but left to itself, becomes formal and static, interested more in the structure of an actuality than in its concreteness. The dynamic-critical side, on the other hand, is pragmatic, oriented to the concrete existent in full appreciation of its particularity but in danger of falling into a relativism that loses all sense of the relationship between things. The metalogical method advances beyond the derailments of formalism and relativism in two ways, as Adams interprets it:

> It aims to apprehend the import inhering in the forms, and it possesses an individual creative power to set up norms. In short, it aims to grasp both form and import. Yet it does not remain attached to particular forms but critically and intuitively reaches back to the principles of being and meaning.[20]

In reaching back to the structure, the method is also open to future concrete expressions for it is aware of an inner infinity in things, an inexhaustibility whereby their meaning and import is not to be determined ultimately on the basis of past or current observation.

The goal of the metalogical method is not, of course, the discovery of "independent metaphysical entities" but rather "the intuition of the forms of meaning filled with living import."[21] Without a form, there can be no meaning in an existent, and without a meaning, there can be no form. The method seeks the form in relation to its dynamic import. And it avoids the splitting of reality into form and matter which is so naturally the trap into which epistemological methods fall when they are not grounded in these principles of meaning. For logical formalism soon discovers that actualities do not fit its patterns while empiricism cannot comprehend self-transcendence. The metalogical approach to the being in things allows procedure through aesthetic, ethical, social and religious functions as well as through the logical. Adams defines the intention of Tillich's method:

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[19] Adams' translation of passages from Das System der Wissenschaften, in J.L. Adams, op. cit., p148

[20] Ibid. p. 190

> ...to overcome both naturalism and rationalistic idealism by intuiting within actuality a living import of meaning and by breaking through the forms of thought to a supporting, transcending meaning.[22]

The significance of this framework of knowing for the concept of participation is decisive. Since import demands forms, actualities do participate in their essences, Forms or Ideas. On this point, Tillich finds himself in the Platonic tradition. But the theory of forms as developed in that tradition became associated with several assertions Tillich rejects. Although in Plato's own mind the Ideas apparently had the dynamic, creative reality of the gods of Greek mythology [redacted], they later became more formal. While not logical universals in the origin of the tradition, the Ideas came to be understood as static forms, logically definable. The theory as developed, also erred in directing epistemological attention away from things as they are. M.C. D'Arcy writes of Augustine, for example, that "to the question of the source of our knowledge, St. Augustine bids us look up, and not down to the material world which so faintly participates in truth."[23] The down-grading of empirical reality remains throughout the realistic philosophy of the medieval period, which as Tillich observes, "presupposes that universals logically and collectives actually have more reality than the individual." (CB,94)

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[21] From Religionsphilosophie, in FH, cited in Adams, op. cit.p.192
[22] Ibid. p.151

In the Renaissance and Reformation, this medieval philosophy broke down completely under the impact of the autonomous thought of the individual in the one and the deepened sense of individual guilt in the other. No longer can the form of Man take precedence over men. Kierkegaard is perhaps the most clearly outspoken exponent of this contention: "An existing human being does indeed participate in the Ideas, but he is not himself an Idea."[24]

Tillich then reshapes the Platonic theory of forms and the participation of actualities in them by two emphases: on the dynamic nature of forms and on the impossibility of regarding the individual as somehow unreal when compared with the universal. He relates himself to that "subterranean" line of Western thought that understands reality in terms of form-creating and form-destroying processes in a world of creation and conflict, in short, of dynamism. Tillich's positive emphasis on history, drawn from the Judaeo-Christian perspective given its earliest classical expression in St. Augustine's City of God, balances his appreciation of the eternal forms.

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[23] M.C. D'Arcy, The Philosophy of St. Augustine, New York: Meridian, 1957 pp.177-8

[24] Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. D. Swenson and W. Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1944, p.294

> The historical process must be intrinsically related to ideas in order to be able to receive them. And on the other hand, ideas are not static possibilities but dynamic forces whose eternity does not prevent them from becoming temporal, whose essence drives them to appear in existence. (PE,13)

The ideas are not the locus of a greater reality than the individual actualities or events in history but the reality of each requires the other. Adams phrases the view in seemingly paradoxical terms, by saying that "single, underivable happenings are of the essence rather than that the eternal essences realize themselves in universal laws."[25] The ideas share in the dynamic, dialectical character of reality. There is an infinite dimension in them. They are neither at rest nor in unrest but are pregnant with infinite tensions that seek expression and embodiment. Treeness, for example, seeks continual embodiment in trees, and no tree can present itself as the ultimate tree in view of the infinity in treeness. Adams concludes: "the participation of things in the idea corresponds with the participation of the idea in things."[26]

We have observed Tillich's inversion of the traditional participation formula in his description of God as the "absolute participant." The designation was the consequence of projecting the significance of the polarity of ontological elements, individualization and participation, to the Ultimate on the one hand and of expressing the intimacy of the relation of the divine to existents, on the other. Actualities have their power by virtue of the power-to-be of the ground of being in their depth. In the framework of knowing, the same kind of intimacy is to be acknowledged. Essences are not static forms but dynamic potentialities which share in existents as existents share in them. They could not be fulfilled in themselves; they are driven of necessity to become actualized if they are to be fulfilled. Essences are the dynamic inner realities in things that make them what they are. Existents enable essences to become what they might be.

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[25] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.203
[26] Ibid. p.213

The argument of infinite projection which Parmenides used against the forms is subverted in this scheme. The argument was that the Form would be subject to replacement with each ensuing actuality. Tillich sees forms not as limits so much as potentialities. And as potentialities, they are inexhaustible.

This is what Tillich means when he says that "the depth of things, their basis of existence, is at the same time their abyss." The forms have the character of inexhaustible potential. There is in them that which is not as yet fully actualized. No existent presents itself as final. Nevertheless, we are not so to emphasize the abyss that we lose sight of its nature as ground. The abyss is a productive abyss. The inexhaustibility of the ground is expressed in apparent discontent with the incompleteness of any actuality in its task of fulfilling its potential.

> This inexhaustibility denoted here, however, is not to be interpreted as passive inexhaustibility, as a resting ocean,

> which any subject, form or world fails to exhaust, but is to be understood as an active inexhaustibility, as a productive inner infinity of existence, i.e. as the "consuming fire" that becomes a real abyss for every form. Thus inexhaustibility of being is simultaneously the expression of the fullness, the power of being and meaning of everything, and the expression for the inner insecurity, limitation and fate of everything to succumb to the abyss. (IH,83-4)

Adams traces this perspective to Boehme and Schelling, emphasizing its central role in Tillich's thought.[27] It helps him avoid a logism that has no way of understanding the irrational elements in creativity. It allows him an escape from the difficulties of a static theory of forms, among them the inability to explain adequately how actualities, which are dynamic, participate in those forms. In view of a form-creating and form-destroying process, Tillich can include both continuity and dynamic change in his analysis of the relation of actualities to essences.

The ultimate principle behind the act of knowing, then, for Tillich, is the unconditionally real, the "support and threat of meaning."[28] Every finite reality presents itself to the knowing mind as finite, not final. It reveals itself as a finite approximation of a form that transcends it in potentiality. Each points to the infinite at its depth, without whose power it would not be and in whose power it will no longer be. The Infinite is not a being or a level of being, but something "qualitative, present in every finite reality." The Infinite or the Ultimate or the Unconditioned is "not to be confused", Tillich points out, with the Absolute of German idealism or the arche of Greek metaphysics. "It is not the highest ontological concept derived from an analysis of the whole of being." (PE,163) It is rather, a theological affirmation of the relation of the Ultimate to that which is not ultimate, of God to man. As such, it is not the conclusion of a philosophical argument. The deductions of thought may point to its possibility, but it is known ultimately only in a decision, a decision for the Unconditioned, in encounter with reality. (IH,141) Ultimately, knowledge of truth is possible only as we are grasped by the Unconditioned.

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[27] Ibid. p.201,n.23 and p.129
[28] Ibid. p.137

The ground and aim of philosophy is that in that grasping we may recognize that what grasps us is no Stranger, for the Unconditioned is the depth of our own existence, the inner infinity and basic inexhaustibility in everything we know and love and are threatened by. That Unconditioned, which is the ground of meaning in everything, the import in every form, is the ground of our own meaning and import. It participates in us and we in it.

Thus for Tillich, actualities and forms have reality, but the really Real, the depth of existence, is beyond while at the ground of every conditioned existent. It is at once the unconditionally real and the unconditionally valid, the source not only of the being of things but of their meaning as well. Within the framework of this ultimate principle of meaning and being and participation in it, knowing takes place.

4. The Kairos Setting of Knowledge

Tillich's stress on the crucial role of decision vis-a-vis the Unconditioned in the process of knowing reminds us that a theory of cognition cannot have as its only points of reference the principles of meaning. Cognition is, after all, an act of actual men in actual existence. It must therefore be understood not only in terms of its background in a framework of principles but in its setting in a concrete historical situation. Cognitive acts participate in the limitations and possibilities of historical existence.

Reason, then, is finite in its actuality. As "the structure of mind and reality" it is eternal, to be sure, but in so far as reason is actual it is so "in the processes of being, existence and life" and therefore subject to the ambiguous, self-contradictory character of existence in which it participates. (ST I, 81) Tillich finds this fact recognized most clearly in classical form by Nicolas of Cusa and Kant, the former speaking of the docta ignorantia which knows that it does not comprehend, that man's cognitive reason is in actuality incapable of grasping its infinite ground, and the latter asserting the inability of the rational categories of the mind to reach the categorical imperative, the unconditional element in reality-itself. Actual reason does not delineate and comprehend disembodied truths. Nor are there truths of revelation that are "thrown like a stone" into the world. Revelatory events themselves even as found in the Bible, held as a source of theology, must include the witness of those who creatively participate in them. (ST I, 35) There is no Logos known apart from an historical situation. The philosophical principles of Cusa and Kant are underscored by the Reformation and the biblical insistence on the qualitative totality of human estrangement.

With this much contended so forcefully in Tillich, how can it be possible for man to apprehend truth at all? Tillich's answer lies in his penetrating analysis of history as *kairos* rather than *chronos*. In his historical existence, man is not merely subject to *chronos* as empty, continuous time, but has the task of participating in *kairos*, historical time that is a moment filled with content, rich with possibility and full of significance precisely because it is historical and actual. The *kairos* is the moment in which life's essential meanings may be asked for and prepared for. It has the concrete character of a particular historical moment but is open to essential truth. Philosophy does not simply comprise the knowledge of eternal principles but, along with all forms of human knowledge from the physical to the cultural sciences, it has a fate, to be embedded in an historical situation. It is related both to *logos* and *kairos*, as is our knowledge of that fact itself. Tillich writes:

> So muss auch diese unsere Erkenntnis vom Schicksalscharakter der Philosophie zugleich im Logos und im Kairos stehen. Stände sie nur im Kairos, so wäre sie geltungslos, so würde alles Gesagte nur für den gelten, der es gesagt hat; stände sie nur im Logos, so wäre sie schicksalslos, hätte also nicht teil am Sein, das selber im Schicksal steht. (GW IV, 35)

Tillich's insistence on the *kairos*-setting of cognition affords him a basis for rejecting an absolutist rationalism that is a static type of thinking in terms of form, for which time is basically insignificant. In this kind of thinking the world is "at best an immense abstraction" and meaning comes in escape from the temporal, historical process.

On the other hand, Tillich avoids the pitfall of relativism by "der Standpunkt des gläubigen Relativismus," a relativism which overcomes relativism. (GW IV, 74) This "belief-ful relativism" has two dimensions.

On the one hand, it is the only absolute position because it recognizes its own relativity. On the other hand, its setting is not simply relative time, but the *kairos*, a moment with the significance of possibility, for it is the moment of awareness of the presence of the Unconditioned.

The "main methodical line" of rationalism in Western thought misses the depths of existence as well as the dynamics of history. In its empiricist form, it claims the absolute standpoint of an empty subject, a *tabula rasa*. But there is no historically-disembodied subject. The doctrine of the *kairos* insists that every subject participates in his historical situation. In view of "belief-ful relativism", both the mystical realism that finds meaning and power only in the world of essences, as well as a utilitarian realism that "relates every moment to a purpose lying in the future" are unsatisfactory.[29] The *kairos*-setting of cognition demands an active element in knowledge and "a participation in all sides of life." Tillich calls this an historical realism, whose ideal is "the union of scientific objectivity with a passionate understanding and transformation of the historical situation." (PE, 74-5)

The absolute standpoint of the knower, then, is not in an ability to disengage himself from his world to unite with an eternal world of forms and meanings. Rather, his absolute standpoint is in his relativity, his participation in his world. But that world, though estranged, self-contradictory and ambiguous, is not empty. It has the potential of being an historical moment open to meaning, in fact, a moment that has meaning in that openness - a *kairos*.

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[29] Cited in Ibid., p.195

5. The Logos Foundation of Knowledge

The knower's participation in a kairos is, however, only part of the setting of his cognition. Another participation is the very foundation of his knowing - the knower participates in the Logos-structure of reality. There is a relationship between the Logos of reality and the Logos in him, between objective and subjective reason. This makes knowledge possible. The Logos is commonly shared; "every reasonable being participates in it." (ST I, 23)

Actually, there is a sense in which everything, reasonable or not, participates in the logos. As the structure of being, it is present everywhere. Nothing is excluded from its structure, or it would not be. (ST I, 279) And yet, the reasonable being participates in a special way. The Logos structure implicit in all things becomes conscious in him. His participation is on a higher level. Tillich maintains that it is reason that makes the self a self, by enabling it to be "a centered structure." Correlatively, it is reason that makes the world a world, "a structured whole." "Without reason, without the Logos of being, being would be chaos." (ST I, 172) We might wonder how it is that reason organizes the chaotic elements of self and world: on what does reason center these structures? The answer is on a principle of meaning, the telos of things and the self.

Implicit in Tillich's analysis of the Logos foundation of knowing is the complexity of the participation concept. On the "lower level", that level on which all things participate in the structure of being, the concept has relatively more substantial and causative connotations. All things have at their basis, the ontological elements, the polarities of individualization and participation, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. Without these elements of the structure of reality they would not be. But on the level of conscious, reasonable participation, another set of factors becomes dominant. The creative act of reason makes the self a self and the world a world. This is obviously not an act in which the self has no role. It would not be centered as a self unless in some sense it centered itself. Otherwise, its center would be elsewhere, and the polarity of individualization and participation would be broken with the necessary consequence that the self would be destroyed. To say that the self in the creativity of its rational action participates in the Logos-structure of reality is not to speak substantially or causatively. It is not something outside the self that centers it. The rational act is its own. Participation here is rather a mirrored reflection of the ultimate structure in the concrete self.

And yet, more than this is involved. While the creative rational act is one's own it is not entirely autonomous. For in its depth, the depth of all existence is at work. The nature of that act is to be grasped by reality-itself in its centered structure, to decide for the meaning in all things becoming the meaning of one's own life. The participation-relationship is more real than reflected. The substantial and causative elements are involved, but in elevated and transcended form. The eternal Logos is present and effective in the subjective Logos, although not without the self's creative act. Tillich writes:

> Wohl schwingt dieser ewige Logos durch all unser Denken hindurch, wohl kann es keinen Denkakt geben ohne die heimliche Voraussetzung seiner unbedingten Wahrheit. (GW IV, 34)

Kierkegaard has acknowledged that the individual "in thinking participates in something transcending himself."[30] More is involved in our thinking than appears; the rational structures are not simply our own. It is significant that Tillich adds to his affirmation of the eternal Logos at work in the human mind the transcendent affirmation: "Aber diese unbedingte Wahrheit ist nicht unser Besitz."

In explicating the fundamental significance of the Logos for knowing, Tillich draws a distinction between the Logos of the philosopher and that of the theologian. The philosopher grounds his thinking in the universal while the theologian bases his on an historical event, the Logos become flesh. "The concrete Logos which he sees is received through believing commitment and not, like the universal Logos at which the philosopher looks, through rational detachment." (ST I, 24)

These two refractions of the Logos roughly correspond to the two elements Tillich finds subsisting in the concept from its inception, with each receiving different emphases in the periods of its development. In his view, the "conceptual symbol" of Logos has always had cosmological and religious elements. Heraclitus, author of the doctrine, contrasted the Logos and its laws with the folly of people and the disorder of society, while the Stoics emphasized the universal order with which the wise could be identified. In Philo, the motif of the mystery of God which requires a mediating factor toward man became the setting of the Logos doctrine while in Christianity, both motifs are present. There "participation in the universal Logos is dependent on participation in the Logos actualized in a historical personality." (ST II, 112) The Christian transformation substituted the Spiritual Man for the Wise Man of the Stoics.

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[30] Soren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, trans. D. Swenson, commentary by N. Thulstrup, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1962, p.46

Tillich wants to retain both elements in his use of the "conceptual symbol." He speaks of the manner in which "the divine discloses its Logos quality without ceasing to be the divine mystery." (ST I, 119) The Logos is no limited or definable principle. Rather, it "opens the divine ground, its infinity and its darkness, and it makes its fullness distinguishable, definite, finite." (ST I, 251) Tillich sees in the Logos the reflection of the divine depth. Reminiscent of Schelling's doctrine of the Word, Tillich's understanding of the Logos is that it is the principle of God's "self-objectification." Without Logos God would be a consuming abyss, not the creative ground of all beings and their structure. Without the relation to the mystery of God, on the other hand, the Logos would become an empty, static absolute. In religious language, Tillich points out, the dynamic unity of both elements is called Spirit. (ST I, 156)

Tillich wants not only to retain both elements but to maintain their ultimate identity. The Logos of the philosopher is not a Logos apart from the theologian's. The principle is the reflection of the mystery. Thus, "the essence of ontological reason, the universal Logos of being, is identical with the content of revelation." (ST I, 74) However, actual reason, as it is developed in man, stands under the limitations of existence, participating in the destructive forces of existence but being a potential participant in the saving structures of life as it participates in the New Being. When Heidegger, lecturing on logic, says "Die Lehre vom Denken ist mit Recht so betitelt; denn das Denken ist das legein des logos" Tillich will say Yes and No.[31] Ontologically, and essentially this is quite so; existentially it is not.

The participation of the knower in the rational structure of being is, then, rather complex in its dialecticality. A basic participation subsists for in a minimal way, nothing is excluded from participation in that structure. But in the rationality of man's mind, a richer participation is possible. The potential is not naturally actualized, however, for man participates not only in Logos but in kairos as well, and is limited by the finite conditions of human existence. The Yes of participation as a possibility is followed by the No of actual existence. Nevertheless, another Yes is possible, in the soteriological reality of the New Being, a participation in the Logos that offers a breakthrough out of the limitations of existence into the ecstasy of unambiguous life. The complex dialectical structure of the participation-relationship enables Tillich to insist that man, created in the image of God with a Logos analogous to the divine, is such that "the divine Logos can appear as man without destroying the humanity of man." (ST I, 259) A primitive postulate of Tillich's entire system is that man does not know God as a Stranger, as the Wholly Other only. There is in man's essential nature that which enables him to recognize God as one with whom he is related, that is, a participation in the divine Logos. Nevertheless, a second primitive postulate is that man cannot know God through his own efforts but divine disclosure is required. The two postulates are held together in the complexity of that participation.

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[31] Martin Heidegger, Was Heisst Denken?, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954, p.163

This understanding of the dialectical complexity of the participation-relationship clarifies a problem that Adams says almost brings us "into a vertigo" trying to catch the implications of Tillich's dynamic conception of truth. Adams quotes at length from Tillich's The Interpretation of History:

> The dynamic conception of truth is not relativistic. It has nothing statically absolute in reference to which it can be called relative, while the static conception of truth forces one to relativism, as soon as the arrogance of the absolute position is broken down. The dynamic thought of truth overcomes the alternative "absolute-relative." The kairos, the fateful moment of knowledge, is absolute insofar as it places one at this moment before the absolute decision for or against truth, and it is relative insofar as it knows that this decision is possible only as a concrete decision, as the fate of the time. Thus the kairos serves to reveal rather than to conceal the Logos. (IH,175)

But that, for Adams, is precisely the question: "Does Tillich's conception of kairos reveal the Logos? And even if it does, is the Logos revealed in anything more than a formal way?"[32]

From a standpoint within the participation concept, the kairos can be seen to reveal the Logos in two essential ways. First, the fact that the Logos is known only in the event of participation in the kairos, in the concrete historical situation, reveals the dynamic, unconditioned nature of the Logos. The Logos is no static absolute but rooted in the Unconditioned as the self-objectification of the Ultimate, objectified always in relation to the kairos that can receive it. In a sense, this is a purely "formal" insight. It says nothing about any abiding content of the Logos. The kairos, that is, the fact that the principle of truth is known only in history rather than in escape from history, reveals the "form" of the Logos, a dynamic form, a form beyond form.

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[32] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.255

The second way in which the kairos reveals the Logos, however, goes beyond formality. For the kairos reveals that the Logos is such that it is to be known in the concreteness of historical situations. This is a decisive affirmation about the inner nature of the Logos. The entire framework of Tillich's theory of cognition revolves on this principle. Essences are potentialities. They are driven toward actualization in existence. Similarly, the Logos itself, in its inner dynamic, seeks to reveal itself in historical concreteness, in the "right time." The kairos conception reveals that reason is not fulfilled in the knowing of truths but in dynamic participation in truth. Tillich's key sentence in describing the ideal of knowledge in historical realism bears repetition. It is found in two forms. That ideal is "the union of scientific objectivity with passionate self-interpretation and self-transformation," that is to say, in deepened participation in the structure of being and its meaning, or a union of that objectivity "with a passionate understanding and transformation of the historical situation," that is, in participation in the concrete, unrepeatable kairos. (PE, 74-5) In the light of these elements of dynamic participation, the special mode of Tillich's understanding of the foundational principle of idealism as the prius of all thinking becomes clear.

6. The Identity of Thought and Being

The presuppositions of all thought for Tillich are the principia per se nota which are self-evident: esse, verum, bonum. "They constitute the Absolute in which the difference between knowing and known is not actual." (TC,15) In this kind of affirmation, Tillich stands very much in the Idealist tradition. The structure of the mind is identical with the structures of the actualities it knows. The law of reason is the law of nature within mind and reality; it is the divine law, rooted in the ground of being itself. (ST I, 34) Dorothy Emmet, reflecting on such assertions, concludes that what Tillich says of ontological reason "is dependent on idealistic epistemological assumptions which are insufficiently examined or justified."[33]

Is this an accurate assessment? Adams sees the matter differently. To him, Tillich transcends philosophical idealism while retaining the idealistic presupposition which, for him, is not actualized in thought but in the religious act.[34] In Tillich's view, within the world there is ultimately an unconditioned meaningfulness. His Absolute is not static but dynamic, the mysterious ground of religious faith rather than the principle of philosophic thought. The real and the rational are equated, but by a transformation of rationality in dynamic unconditionedness.

Adams' assessment is supported by frequent critiques of idealism found in Tillich's writings. He rejects idealism in its pretension of comprehending reality in its system. Tillich holds that idealism cannot include the true nature of existence in its contradiction of essence in its exposition. Nor is it really aware of the depth of being, in its form-bursting as well as form-supporting power. (IH,61) The defect of Hegel's system specifically is that in its development the logical element engulfed the "metalogical" and dynamic. (FH,122) Hegel's philosophy confused, with Romanticism generally, poetry and intuition with knowledge. (ST I, 99) Hegel did not appreciate the finitude of reason, which means that man cannot of himself rise to the knowledge of being-itself. (ST I, 81-2) Man cannot comprehend reality from within it, nor can he catapult himself to a perspective on the outside of reality to view it as a whole. The participation concept is useful here in drawing attention to the similarity and distinction between Tillich's position and that of classical idealism. Idealism is a philosophy of identity, Tillich's of participation. In Tillich's system, the element of separation, of existence from essence or of beings from their ground, is included as well as their relationship, their unity without uniformity. The preservation of this dialectical tension by Tillich is what Adams mistakenly calls a confusion in his exposition. In Adams' view, Tillich on the one hand "seems to accept the idealistic principle of the identity of thought and being" while on the other, "he insists that there is an infinite tension between them."[35] The fact is that in essence they are identical for Tillich but in actual existence far removed from one another, though never beyond healing and redemption. Participation is a conceptual symbol for the dialectical relationship between the knower and the known.

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[33] D. Emmet, in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.207
[34] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.252

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[35] Ibid. p.176

It can include the dynamism of both subject and object in its kind of relationship.

But not only does Tillich presuppose that meaning is rooted in reality-itself but also that "the really real is at the same time the foundation of value."[36] The Real is not only equated with the Rational but with the Valuable. Tillich therefore likes to speak of the "grasping and shaping" functions of reason that not only finds that which makes the universe intelligible, but attempts on that basis to make it more livable. To participate in the really real is also to participate in meaning. The Ground of Being is at the same time the Ground of Meaning.

As we have seen, the structure of thought demands meaning, even though it may allow that the meaning of life is that it is meaningless. The presence of the Unconditioned could in that case, mean only threat to every security and truth on which the mind seeks to build. But at this point knowledge may become faith. The mind may be grasped by the Unconditioned and decide for it. The meaning in the Unconditioned is then an affirmative meaning. Ultimately, as Adams points out, Tillich's epistemological method is one of faith which decides for that unconditioned meaning which pulsates through every aspect of creation.[37] Such faith is an act of the total personality, with will, knowledge and emotion participating. (BR,53) From this standpoint of Unconditioned Meaning, Tillich deplores the severance of credere and intelligere he finds in Aquinas. The principle that the same object cannot be both the object of faith and knowledge makes faith less than knowledge. (TC,17) Tillich seeks to reunite them in the setting of the unconditioned nature of all knowledge and meaning.

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[36] P. Tillich, "Reply..." in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.333
[37] Adams, op. cit., p.215

In this basic point dealing with the concurrence of thought and being, however, Tillich must be found guilty of an obscurity that has confounded his critics and interpreters alike. Running through the center of his system are two axiological principles that become confused in ambiguous statements. Tillich's is a philosophical theology of being and the meaning of being. Through his philosophical and theological writings the two questions parallel each other - the question of being and the question of meaning. But their relationship, and distinction, is not always clear. In the Introduction to his Systematic Theology Tillich defines "being" as "the whole of human reality, the structure, the meaning and the aim of existence." (ST I, 14) Unfortunately, this kind of statement confounds the that of things with the why of things.

Man asks two kinds of questions. He asks about being. What is a being, this being? How is it related to, distinguished from, dependent upon other beings or being-itself? This series of questions requires the operation of rational tools in order to be answered. Their realm offers the possibility of controlling knowledge. Ultimately, the process of thought is led to answer that being is dynamic and unconditioned and that an inner infinity is within every being.

Then man is driven to ask further, what is the meaning of being? What is the meaning of the relationships and the distinctiveness among beings? What is the meaning of the whole of reality? This series of questions demands the broadening and deepening of the rational tools, the development of the cultural sciences and philosophy, though even then, the answer is only that meaning is there, dynamic and unconditioned. In faith's decision, however, it is affirmed and the meaning of being is seen not only in its unconditioned dynamism but in its self-transcendence.

Participation as a conceptual symbol brings these two axiological principles out in bold relief through Tillich's system. For the dynamism of participation is rooted in the fact that beings not only participate in being but in meaning, and that their ground is the ground of both being and meaning. It is in participation in meaning that participation moves to a higher level. Meaning transforms the dynamic of being into self-transcendence, encounter into communion, existence into life, a human being into a self, an environment into a world, a group into a community, history into the kingdom of God. When meaning is present, the Abyss of beings is seen as their Ground, Being-itself as Being-for-us, the Unconditioned as God. There is, to be sure, an ultimate identity between thought, value, aim or meaning on the one hand, and being on the other, in that they have the same ground. But in exposition, they must be kept distinct, that the transformation wrought by one on the other may be clear. A consistent use of the participation concept can help do this.

7. The Method of Verification

Tillich's discussions of the verification of truth have long been under attack. Dorothy Emmet asks how Tillich knows that the laws of reality and of the mind are identical. How can we know that the _Logos_ structures are descriptive and not prescriptive, that is, justified only by the system that is based upon them?[38] Adams contends that Tillich has failed to give any material principle by which the particular meaning that may be posited in relation to the Unconditioned or the kairos may be tested or to which meanings can be referred for verification. He offers a formal principle, to be sure, in theonomy and the structure implicit in that principle. But again, a formal principle of this kind is verifiable only in its consistency with the system that surrounds it.[39] J. Heywood Thomas maintains that Tillich's impatience with empirical verification undermines his whole view.

A brief review of the analysis of the problem of verification in the first volume of the Systematic Theology is thus necessary. (ST I, 102-5) A method of verification is, in Tillich's mind, essential to avoid reducing judgments to mere expressions of the subjective condition of a person. Cognitive acts demand a method. "The verifying test belongs to the nature of truth."

The safest test is surely the repeatable experiment. All realms of knowledge are not, however, open to this method. It cannot be the exclusive pattern of verification for there are areas of knowledge that cannot allow for the halt and disruption of the total life-process in order that calculable elements may be distilled from them and tested under controlled conditions. An experiential verification "within the life-process itself" is required as well.

These two methods of verification correspond to the two basic kinds of knowledge which Tillich has described as controlling and receiving or existential. The latter "is verified by the creative union of two natures, that of knowing and that of the known," within the life-process. The various sciences allow different proportions of each method, though even in biological, psychological and sociological research where the experimental method has great range, the life-processes themselves are open only to reception in a creative union in order to be known. Physicians, psychotherapists, educators and social reformers must verify their knowledge partly by "participation in the individual life with which they deal." In historical knowledge particularly, interpretation demands participation in terms of understanding, without which no significant history is possible. Tillich grants that the experiential life-process method is less exact, but he insists that it is also more true to life.

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[38] D. Emmet, in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., pp.207-8

[39] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.255-6

Both rationalism and pragmatism fail as schemes of verification in Tillich's estimate. Rationalism deals with self-evident principles that cannot reach beyond themselves. As principles they are only formal. Any concrete principle is subject to experimental or experiential verification. Pragmatism lacks a criterion. To its assertion that the true is the successful the question must be raised, "What is the criterion of success?" That question cannot be answered pragmatically.

The way in which philosophical systems have been verified historically is the method of verification Tillich supports. "Their verification is their efficacy in the life-process of mankind. They prove to be inexhaustible in meaning and creative in power." The method is not entirely definite, but it combines elements of both rationalism and pragmatism, as in the historical development of those systems elements are discarded and superseded. Even this method is threatened by the possibility of meaninglessness, but that very fact indicates its true-to-life quality, for it carries with it the radical risk of life.

There is a serious difficulty with Tillich's statement of his position. The same question he raises against pragmatism's criterion of success can be directed against his own criterion of efficacy. In what way can a principle be proven to be efficacious? What must it effect? Randall points out that Tillich "falls back, in language worthy of James himself, on a pretty crude pragmatic method of verification."[40] Tillich's position is the same as Hartmann's on this point, where he writes that the ontological coincidence of subject and object is confirmed by "the fact that what has come to be known in principle and universally is then progressively confirmed in experience and in the practice of life."[41] Again, where is the criterion that confirms the principle more rather than less? At the most, one can say that Tillich has existentialized the pragmatic method.

According to Adams, on Tillich's principles, meaning cannot be tested by anything "in the existential order" when it is a matter of religious consciousness. That is to say that the will of God is the ultimate verifying factor. But the will of God then must have a definite content which brings us to confront the difficulty again. In Tillich's system, at least in the earlier writings which Adams analyzes, the transcendence of God makes the frame of reference the unconditioned. Definite content would subvert the principle of theonomy for a heteronomy. Tillich's criterion for truth must then be only formal.

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[40] J.H. Randall, Jr. in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p.150
[41] N. Hartmann, op. cit., p.140

What can verify a principle, a philosophical or religious world-view, a social system? From the standpoint of Tillich's kairos concept, the question can be asked of science: while the experimental method verifies scientific discoveries, what can verify the scientific endeavor as a whole? Might it not be part of a world-view and movement that is destructive of human values and realities?

There is within Tillich's system the kernel of an answer to the verification problem which breaks through in isolated sentences but is not exposed in its full dimensions. The difficulty with rationalism and pragmatism is that neither "sees the element of participation in knowledge." (ST I, 104) Implicit in Tillich's system is a method of verification by the dynamics of participation, that includes experimental and experiential methods along with the coherence of rational structure. Verification by participation has four points of reference.

A principle, position or world-view has "efficacy in the life-processes of mankind" first if it enables the individual knower and the historical community of which he is a part to participate more fully in the structure of being. The polar elements of individualization and participation, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny all have empirical content as well as ontological structure. The elements of identity and separation are not to be abrogated without serious impairment of the life-process.

The second point of reference is participation in meaning. We have seen that participation is enhanced as it becomes not only a relationship to being but to meaning as well. That meaning is dynamic. Its content is in self-transcendence, which again has empirical as well as ontological elements. The ontological side is in the essence or polarity involved; the empirical in growth and continuity.

Third, the dynamics of participation have verifying value in the manner in which the meaning in question imparts the power required for self-transcendence, the courage to be more. A false world-view can undermine self-transcendence; a valid meaning will impart its power. Participating knowledge changes the knower and the known.

The fourth referent in the dynamics of this relationship is, of course, the Unconditioned. In the experience of participation, this is not simply a formal principle. In the relationship, the Unconditioned is seen as revealing itself in its self-objectification in the *Logos* which represents the inner dependence and relatedness of all existents. Adams has pointed out that in his later writing, Tillich seeks to fill the lacuna in the verification method by the dynamic concept of *agape*, a material and ontological principle. "Love belongs to the structure of Being itself."[42] In the dynamics of the participation-relationship, *agape* becomes visible and real. Both share the same structure of identity and separation. A principle, world-view or system may be verified if it deepens or fulfills the dynamics of participation.

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[42] Cited in J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.256,n.118

8. The Dynamic Complexity of Cognitive Participation

The conceptual symbol of participation is demonstrably central to Tillich's theory of cognition. We have seen not only its influence but its presence at every important juncture in his analysis: in the ontological framework that makes knowing possible and in the existential setting that makes it fragmentary. The elements of participation are the very elements that comprise the cognitive act itself - those of separation and identity. Participation is essential to every act of knowledge and is fulfilled in the religious knowledge of faith. Ultimately, knowledge is verified not only by empirical test but by its contribution to the dynamic realizations of participation.

Considering the difference in the two constellations we have surveyed and the complexity of the concept, a remarkable consistency obtains in Tillich's use of participation ontologically and cognitively. In three qualities that shape the character of the concept this continuity is particularly clear: it is dynamic, multi-directional and multi-dimensional.

Tillich's is a dynamic ontology. The static associations of Being-itself as a term are misleading; the really Real is always dynamic as must be any relationship with it. Participation, especially at the microcosmic, human level, is seen to be a vital relationship with the power of being in which one discovers the courage to be. Similarly, Tillich's is a dynamic cognition. Within and beyond the known as its ground and abyss is the Unconditioned, never confined to forms, always form-creating and form-destroying. The relationship of knower and known must be a vital relationship, of "grasping and shaping," of being open to reality's deeper levels, of living in and transforming the kairos in relation to the Logos. Appropriate to this dynamic theory of cognition is the dialectical method.

The unique twist Tillich brings to the participation concept in its ontological setting is an inversion - the power of being participates in beings as well as beings participating in the power of being; God is the "absolute participant." Similarly, inversion is present in the cognitive constellation. Essences participate in actualities and the Logos in the kairos. The Unconditioned is present in the inner infinity of the finite. What is becoming clear is that Tillich finds the solutions to the philosophical problems of ontology and cognition in an ontology whose questions may be implicit in human experience but whose answers are rooted in faith. Multi-directional participation is one expression of that faith-founded ontology. In cognition, these directions, "above" and "below," are even extended - outward. In acts of knowing, the knower participates not only in the structure of being but in the historical context, the culture in which he lives and has the task of re-shaping it. The multi-directional character of participation is surely not caused by unreflective use of the term - it reveals the very structure of reality as Tillich sees it.

In distinction again from accustomed use, the participation concept in Tillich's ontology is not simply substantial or causative but includes and transcends these categories in being symbolic. Even more clearly is this the case in his theory of cognition. The knower participates in the known and in his historical situation with all the actuality of "substance" and all the effectiveness of "causality" but in a way not limited to either of these categories. For participation ultimately includes both axiological principles, of being and meaning. It is a participation in the meaning of the known and the meaning of the Unconditioned. Participation is multi-dimensional. It is "symbolic," the significance of which we must next analyze.

The empiricist likes to distinguish between the "hard" knowledge of experimental verification and the "soft" knowledge of intuition as well as cultural and religious experience. The philosopher of participation chooses other terms, such as the "narrow" kind of knowing by strict scientific and rationalistic principles, and the "open" kind, by dynamic participation.

CHAPTER IV

THE PARTICIPATION OF SYMBOLS IN REALITY

The theory of religious symbols that Tillich developed over the years, from a basic article on "Das Religiöse Symbol" in 1928 through a paper on "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols" in 1961, has been a subject of intense interest and widespread discussion for many reasons. The question of the kind of language that is to be used in speaking of God is a central issue in contemporary theology. Tillich's theory has an undoubted originality which has yielded some startling conclusions. Perhaps that very originality has made of this one of the most vulnerable sections of his system. In any case, this theory represents the turning-point in the Tillichian system, where he speaks no longer primarily as a philosopher but as a theologian. Here is where thought takes on religious significance - and what Tillich says at this point is that God is a symbol. (DF,45)

The question of religious language has been raised in most urgent form, of course, in two circles. Those in the empiricist tradition have asked for means by which religious assertions may be verified. They question statements that avoid empirical validation. In the study of theological statements they find not only logical inconsistencies but what appears to be irresponsible manipulation of ambiguous terms. With this same heritage behind them, others have taken a different approach, proceeding on the supposition that religious talk is not simply subjective self-expression but deals with a realm of reality to which rules of logic and verification from other realms might not apply. Thus, linguistic analysts have come to ask for the principles by which religious talk may be governed to assure meaningful communication.

On the other hand, the language we use in religion has been questioned by those seeking to discover the meaning of the biblical message for contemporary man. Rudolf Bultmann has asked with forcefulness, if the Christian message must not be disengaged from the world-view in which it was embedded, that is, de-mythologized. Must not that message be understood and expressed in language of the twentieth century rather than that which meets us in the Bible? But as Bultmann and his school speak of "encounter" and a "call to decision" they clearly have not only de-mythologized but re-mythologized the message. Tillich attempts to steer a course beyond them both:

> It is almost a truism to assert that religious language is symbolic. But it is less of a truism to assert that for this reason religious language expresses the truth, the truth which cannot be expressed and communicated in any other language. And it is far from a truism to say that most errors in religion and most attacks on religion are due to the confusion between symbolic and literal language.[1]

In his elaboration of the nature of that symbolic language in its distinctiveness, Tillich presents a unique theory. In his first publication on the subject, he set off his position sharply over against Freudian-psychological, Marxist-sociological and idealist theories. His position has its historical roots, to be sure. Lewis S. Ford finds them in Schelling's doctrine of potencies while Tillich draws parallels with the principle of analogy of Thomas Aquinas. But Tillich explicitly rejects Ford's surmise[2] while Thomist scholars point out the differences from Aquinas.[3]

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[1] Paul Tillich, "Existential Analyses and Religious Symbols" in Will Herberg (ed.), Four Existentialist Theologians, Garden City: Doubleday, 1958, p.316

Having been born nominalists, as Tillich reminds us, we have almost universally reacted with astonishment at our first exposure to the decisive statement in his symbol theory, that "a symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes." (ST I, 177) Even having at this point examined the concept in the ontological and cognitive constellations of Tillich's thought, we may still find these words startling. The critical have fastened on this point; the sympathetic have been embarrassed by it. J. Heywood Thomas believes the distinction Tillich draws between symbol and sign on the basis of participation "is never justified, and it is difficult to see how it can be justified."[4] Ford does not see how the participation concept adds anything more than an awareness of connotations and "intrinsic affinity." How can a flag, he asks, participate in the real power of the nation it represents, which is to levy taxes and administer justice?

If Tillich's symbol theory appears to be most vulnerable, it is nevertheless most crucial. As soon as we move beyond the precise definitions of controlling knowledge or the self-clarifying principles of rational construction, we are in the realm of symbolic language. Ford apparently misunderstands this when he concludes from Tillich's statement that dynamics can only be understood symbolically, that therefore a purely conceptual metaphysic would be impossible.[5] On the contrary, a "metaphysic" or ontology is possible in conceptual terms as long as it deals with the structure of being; when it moves beyond the structure, however, to its operation and significance, symbolic language is required. Symbols are involved as well in the interpretative side of the sciences, e.g. the discussions of "life processes" and "evolution." They are the material of cultural forms and appreciations. And pre-eminently, symbols are the means by which religious knowledge is shaped and communicated. Bowman L. Clarke has written that "if the symbolic assertions collapse, then the boundary line is something beyond which we cannot go."[6] God as Being-itself would be ineffable, with no possibility of communication about him or meaningful relationship with him. Thus, from the standpoint of God-talk, the symbol theory is crucial. But its importance is underscored by Tillich's doctrine of God as well. If God is a symbol, that is, the reality not merely the term, is not our reaction to ask - "only a symbol? "

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[2] Answering Ford, Tillich describes the roots of his theory in Sydney and Beatrice Rome (Eds.) Philosophical Interrogations, New York, Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Watson, 1964, pp.358-9: "The conception of my theory of religious symbols goes far back to sources I am not able to discern in their effectiveness for my thought, to the study of Dionysius the Areopagite, of Scotus Erigena, of Meister Eckhart, of Hegel and David Friedrich Strauss and the whole development of biblical criticism from Spinoza to Albert Schweitzer and Rudolf Bultmann. Schelling and Schleiermacher are important, but not decisive in this 'host of ancestors.'"

[3] cf. Gustave Weigel and G.F. McLean in O'Meara and Weisser, op. cit.

[4] J.H. Thomas, op. cit., p.136

Now as we examine this theory from the perspective of the participation concept as it has been taking shape in our investigations, we shall expect to discover that symbols have a Gestalt that can be analyzed, understood and interpreted, by which they may be verified. We anticipate further, that participation will be a key factor in that Gestalt, even to the point of underlying the various approaches Tillich develops toward understanding symbols. What is more, we can expect that the axiological principles we have been observing in their fundamental operation in Tillich's system, will reveal themselves again here. In fact, we may surmise that in the congruence of being and meaning is the clue to the significance of Tillich's statement that God is a symbol.

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[5] L.S. Ford, dissertation, op. cit.

[6] Bowman L. Clarke, "God and the Symbolic in Tillich", Anglican Theological Review, v. 43, 1961, p.307

In the course of this investigation, the components of Tillich's theory must be analyzed, its dynamics described and its distinctive features reviewed. Then, the significance of the God-symbol can be approached and the full dimensions of symbolic participation interpreted.

1. Symbols and Signs

A decisive distinction that Tillich carries through his symbol theory with consistency is that between a symbol and a sign. The person who uses the phrase "only a symbol" has in Tillich's view "completely misunderstood the meaning of symbol, (for) he confuses symbol with sign and ignores that a genuine symbol participates in the reality of that which it symbolizes."[7] Signs have no essential connection with that which they signify. Stop-lights, for example, could with the proper education of the public, be orange and blue as well as red and green. But symbols are different.

Although Tillich does not generally list the participation characteristic first in describing the nature of symbols, all of the characteristics he presents are reducible to participation or, more precisely, represent aspects of the complexity of the participation-relationship.

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[7] in Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., pp.334-5

One characteristic is that symbols "point beyond themselves." (DF, 41, RET,4) But so do signs. The difference is in the character of that which is pointed to and the manner of the pointing. A sign points directly to a reality or action, a symbol indirectly, for that which is symbolized is not open to ordinary encounters and direct experience. The symbolized can only be known through that which has both an element of separation and an element of identity with it, i.e. that which participates in it.

Similarly, when we ask for the manner by which other characteristics are manifest, how a symbol "opens up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us" as in visual art, drama and music, or how it "also unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality" it is clear that the answer must be by participation. (DF,42) The symbol participates in the dimensions of reality and by offering a participation-relationship to us, opens us to deeper experience and new perceptions. A drama which participates in an aspect of human tragedy or despair, opens a participation to its audience; a painting of a tree that participates in its creative mystery, makes a participation available to its viewer.

Another characteristic follows from these: a symbol "cannot be created at will" or "produced intentionally." (RET,4, DF,43) Even if the medium is the individual creativity of a prophet or an artist, it is "the unconscious-conscious reaction of a group through which it becomes a symbol." Symbols are not interchangeable. The reason again must be their essential role as bridges of participation in that which they symbolize.

Symbols, then, cannot be invented. Signs are invented; symbols are born and die. (TC,58) Symbols do not emerge because people long for them and do not die under the assaults of scientific or practical criticism. They are born out of the "collective unconscious" as Jung termed it, to open dimensions of reality to persons and persons to dimensions of reality. They die when "they can no longer produce response in the group where they originally found expression," which is to say, when they no longer create the conditions for effective participation. (DF,43)

In the last of his essays on symbols, Tillich adds one more characteristic: the "integrating and disintegrating power" of symbols. (RET,5) In the history of religion and culture we can uncover many symbols with "elevating, quieting and stabilizing power" and others that cause "restlessness, producing depression, anxiety, fanaticism, etc." The creative or destructive effects of symbols depend partly on what is symbolized and partly on the group that receives and responds. Holy figures, rites and objects can have divine or demonic consequences; political symbols, such as the Führer and the swastika in Nazism have obviously disintegrating potentialities, while a king or a president along with the ceremonials surrounding them, could be creative factors in a society, provided they give expression by words and actions to the positive aims and aspirations of their people. Again, the effectiveness of symbols in this regard is rooted in the effectiveness of their participation.

While Tillich describes such characteristics of all symbols, he has in his later writings come to define these as "representative symbols," to distinguish them from the symbols of logicians and mathematicians. The change in terminology expresses no corresponding change in theory, however, as from the first, Tillich insists that symbols of a non-representative type are actually signs, invented and interchangeable, with no participation in the realities to which they refer.

On the other end of the scale, however, religious symbols are all re-presentative. That which sets them off as religious symbols is the fact that they deal with our ultimate concern. The nature of ultimacy demands symbolic expression for "the true ultimate transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely." Thus, "no finite reality can express it directly and properly." (DF,44) Further, the nature of faith as not belief in a series of propositions but a dynamic participation in the grasp of ultimate concern, requires symbolization.

Religious symbols, in Tillich's view, stand on two levels. Included on the transcendent level is the symbol of God, the fundamental symbol of our ultimate concern, the qualities and attributes of God, which are taken from the experienced qualities we have ourselves and applied to God symbolically, and the acts of God which we again describe in categories drawn from our experience, which are applicable symbolically to God. Love, omniscience, omnipresence are among the attributes of God, symbolically understood. The most characteristic act of God can be analyzed in the sentence, "God has sent his son." Here the categories of temporality, spatiality, causality and substantiality, all drawn from human experience, are applied to God symbolically. (TC, 62-3) The symbols on this level all draw their power from participation, with its elements of separation and identity. From our investigation of Tillich's theory of cognition, we have seen that the knower participates in the Unconditioned or the Unconditional.[8] Were God not unconditional, he would not be God. Similarly, the attributes and categories are all matters of human participation.

The second level of religious symbols is the immanent. The incarnations of divine beings in men and animals or [illegible] the mana that is the divine power which pervades all reality in primitive religion are on this level. Sacramental objects, which become bearers of the holy in special ways under special circumstances, and aspects of church buildings, crosses and candles which were originally signs have become symbols in being drawn into holiness. Again, except for those objects which are somewhat interchangeable, which Tillich calls sign-symbols, these are clearly participants, re-presentative of the divine which is beyond themselves in a relationship they help develop with men.

Reviewing Tillich's analysis of symbols in their cultural as well as religious realms, the key characteristic that underlies them is unmistakable:

> The difference between symbol and sign is the participation in the symbolized reality which characterizes the symbols, and the non-participation in the 'pointed-to' reality which characterizes a sign. (TC,54-5)

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[8] It is to be noted that Tillich changed his terminology from the Unconditioned (das Unbedingte) in his earlier writings to the Unconditional in the Systematic Theology and most of the later writings in English. The connotation of the former, that there is some thing which is unconditioned (which it carries in English translation) is an implication Tillich certainly does not want to foster.

2. The Non-Symbolic Referent of Religious Symbolization

In his initial analysis of the religious symbol, Tillich writes that "all knowledge of God has a symbolic character." (RET,316)[9] This statement drew from Wilbur M. Urban the criticism that Tillich only gives a symbolic significance to religious language, which precludes any real religious knowledge. The statement implies a symbolic relativism without a referent. Tillich's response was to incorporate this criticism into his later discussions of religious symbols. He agreed that a non-symbolic element was required and sought to identify it:

> The non-symbolic element in all religious knowledge is the experience of the Unconditioned as the boundary, ground and abyss of everything conditioned. This experience is the boundary-experience of human reason and therefore (it is) expressible in negative-rational terms. But the Unconditioned is not God. God is the affirmative concept pointing beyond the boundary of the negative-rational terms and therefore is itself a positive-symbolic term.[10]

In the process of cognition, man is driven to awareness of the Unconditional. Within the bounds of rational knowledge, however, the Unconditional is only a necessary principle. As a necessary principle, it is negative. The Unconditional is, therefore, not God - but God is unconditional. This quality is essential to his nature and provides the non-symbolic point of reference for language about him. Implicit in Tillich's argument is an intrinsic relationship between God as unconditional and the Unconditional which is known at the limits of human knowledge. The symbol of God "has something to do with the transcendent reality which is symbolized in it."[11]

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[9] Translated from "Das Religiöse Symbol", which is in GW V,208.

[10] Paul Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge", Journal of Liberal Religion, v.2, 1941, p. 203

[11] Ibid., p. 204

Tillich has expressed his appreciation for Urban's point that when the concept of symbol becomes all-embracing, it becomes meaningless and goes on to say: "The unsymbolic statement which implies the necessity of religious symbolism is that God is being-itself, and as such beyond the subject-object structure of everything that (exists)."[12] The statement that God is being-itself "means what it says directly and properly" and is non-symbolic. However, "after this has been said, nothing else can be said about God as God which is not symbolic." (ST I, 238-9)

W.R. Rowe claims that Tillich shifts his ground in the second volume of the Systematics where he states that when we talk of God as "the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time." (ST II, 10)[13] Rowe does not see that in Tillich's terms that particular statement must have two elements, religious and rational. The designations of "infinite," "unconditional," and "being-itself" present the rational side while the fact that these are affirmations about God reveals their ecstatic context. The statement thus represents the boundary between non-symbolic and symbolic predication.

This reduction of non-symbolic religious assertions to a single instance is rather unsatisfying to a number of Tillich's critics. Gustave Weigel is disconcerted by "symbolists" and refers particularly to a sentence of Reinhold Niebuhr's which reads, "I do not know how it is possible to believe in anything pertaining to God and eternity 'literally.'"[14]

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[12] In Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p. 334

[13] W.R. Rowe, "The Meaning of 'God' in Tillich's Theology", Journal of Religion, v. 42, 1962, p. 279

[14] G. Weigel in O'Meara and Weisser, op. cit. p. 186. The quotation is from Niebuhr's "Reply" in Kegley and Bretall, (eds.) Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought, New York: Macmillan, 1956, p. 446

Although Tillich does allow one literal statement, Weigel's point is that this is a formal rather than a substantial principle. George F. McLean joins him in maintaining that a weakness of Tillich's theology is that his symbol theory provides no "objective information about God." Tillich's response is predictably that such a phrase sounds "almost blasphemous: it makes God into an object about which 'informations' are possible."[15] The nature of ultimacy requires a non-symbolic referent; the nature of God and religious faith prohibit more.

Nevertheless, these critics touch on an important issue, which has already come to the surface in the context of Tillich's theory of cognition: is God as Unconditional only known as a formal principle and if so, is he then really known at all?

Tillich's answer is that there are two ways of reaching the referent of religious symbolism. One is the ontological analysis of man and his question, that of being-itself, "the prius of everything that is." The other is the phenomenological approach which describes the holy as known in encounter.

> The experience of the holy transcends the subject-object structure of experience. The subject is drawn into the holy, embodied in a finite object which, in this encounter, becomes sacred. An analysis of this experience shows that wherever the holy appears it is a matter of ultimate concern both in attracting and in repelling, and of unconditional power, both in giving and in demanding. (RET,6-7)

The finite objects, which become religious symbols, are symbols of the Holy. "As such they participate in the holiness of the holy." They mediate the dimension of the unconditional. "But participation is not identity; they are not themselves the Holy. The wholly transcendent transcends every symbol of the Holy." (TC,59) Any actuality can become, in the right situation, the bearer of the holy in its unconditional power. This is the reason for the infinite richness, or the apparent chaos, of symbolization in the history of religion.

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[15] Paul Tillich, "An Afterword" in O'Meara and Weisser, op. cit.p.306

The point is that phenomenological analysis carries knowledge of the referent in religious symbolism beyond a formal principle. But the "content" it describes is not "information" but a reality in which one is drawn to participate. The source of Tillich's phenomenological emphasis can be seen in the prophetic tradition or more precisely, the First Commandment. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" is a symbolic expression of the unconditional nature of the holy.

However, the phenomenological approach has its limitation. It is only a descriptive, not a validating method. It can yield no judgments on the validity of the phenomena it makes visible. It must be coupled with the ontological way of finding the referent of religious symbolism. Tillich maintains that the two "corroborate each other:"

> That which is the implication of the phenomenological description is also the focal point of the ontological analysis and the referent of the religious symbols. (RET,7)

They corroborate each other, but are they mutually supportive starting-points? Here Tillich might have pursued the inter-relationship a step further, to avoid a lingering ambiguity. The analysis of experiencing the Holy can lead to the affirmation of ultimacy or the unconditional, but the converse is not true. An analysis of the ultimate does not necessarily lead to the Holy; in fact, in principle it cannot. Being an analysis of rational structure, it is unable to break out of its own rational limits. Here again is the place where reason requires faith, for after all, the Ultimate need not be the Holy; it could be the Void. Faith must provide the positive "content." And here again is the place where reason corroborates faith, for in the phenomena of holiness and the participation in holiness of both knower and known, the structure of being becomes visible.

3. Rejected Theories of Religious Symbolization

In his primary work on religious symbols, Tillich rejects three theories explicitly, demonstrating in the process the manner in which he grounds his view in ontological and phenomenological realities.

The Marxist theory uses the expression "ideology" to describe the function of symbols which have no reality other than that which is conferred on them by the will-to-power of the controlling group in society: that is, by the bourgeoisie. The doctrine of ideology itself became a powerful social symbol uncovering the subterfuge involved in a group's desire to dominate society. But that is precisely the difficulty: "the symbol 'ideology' would itself be an ideology." (RET,305) There is no non-ideological position that does not seek to justify the aims of a group. There is no principle by which such could be established. Further, the theory of ideology does not account for any inherent connections between the symbols and the purposes of the group. Unless there were some "cogent relevance to the facts...inherent in the symbols", which is to say, unless there were some participation by the symbol in the reality it symbolizes, it would be impossible to show how the will-to-power could select and make use of the particular symbol.

Tillich sees the Freudian analysis of cultural and religious symbols arising out of unconscious processes as derived from Nietzsche. The psycho-analytical theory interprets the use of the father symbol for God as an expression of a father-complex, for example. But Tillich holds that the theory is not really an explanation of anything other than how religious symbols are selected. It cannot deal with the question of the referent of religious symbolization. The "positing of an unconditioned transcendent can by no means be explained on the basis of the conditioned and immanent impulses of the unconscious." (RET,306) Tillich's argument here is paralleled later in a lecture in which he speaks of Feuerbach's "theory of projection" in contrast to the popular, contemporary one. Feuerbach understood that for projection, a screen is required on which the image can be projected. The question is who is the screen against which the father-image is thrown? The contemporary version has no answer. Feuerbach, however, had an answer, which was that man's experience of his own infinity, his infinite will to live, made it possible for him to project images. (Pers,140) More recent experience of the depth of human estrangement makes Feuerbach's answer impossible, but his recognition of the need of an infinite _a priori_ is correct. In writing of the soul's need for religious symbols, Tillich maintains that the fact that the soul requires religious expression can only be explained by the fact that it is religious, "that the relation to the unconditioned transcendent is essential or constitutive for it." (RET,307) That is to say, the soul is created for participation in the unconditional, and is restless until that participation is fulfilled.

The critical-idealist theory is epitomized by Ernst Cassirer's interpretation of mythical symbols. Symbolic reality is an objective creation according to the laws by which myths are formed. Mythology is in essence a cultural creation alongside others and religion is in this case an autonomous area of meaning. There is no point of reference possible in things-in-themselves; rather, mythical symbols are determined by their own principles. The difficulties with this theory are that its idealistic presuppositions do not allow a satisfactory relationship of symbol to reality and cannot explain how religious symbolism rises above, struggles against, and overcomes the mythical symbolism with which it was originally interfused. Tillich's alternative is again, the presence of the Unconditioned. Against the rejected theories he proposes his "transcendent realism" in which the referent of the mythical symbol is "the unconditioned transcendent, the source of both existence and meaning." (RET,314)

4. The Dialectic of Religious Symbols

The first of the three strands of Tillich's theory of symbols which Lewis S. Ford unravels is the dialectical.[16] Actually, just as Tillich's characteristics of symbols center on participation, so all three strands are best understood as various forms of the one, or as wrappings around the inner core of the participation of symbols in the symbolized.

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[16] The major sections of Ford's dissertation have been published in an article, "The Three Strands in Tillich's Theory of Religious Symbols" in Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966, pp.104-30

The familiar Yes and No, the dialectic of affirmation and negation which is evident in Tillich's theory of cognition, is present in his symbol theory. Tillich writes:

> The segment of finite reality which becomes the vehicle of a concrete assertion about God is affirmed and negated at the same time. It becomes a symbol, for a symbolic expression is one whose proper meaning is negated by that to which it points. And yet it also is affirmed by it, and this affirmation gives the symbolic expression an adequate basis for pointing beyond itself. (ST I, 239)

This dialectic forms the critical principle in Tillich's symbol theory. In view of it, symbolic predication can be neither univocal nor equivocal. Tillich goes on to say in the same passage that "the analogia entis gives us our only justification of speaking at all about God." (ST I, 240)

The dialectic is rooted in the very structure of being, in the infinite transcendence of the Unconditional over the conditioned and is reflected in the cognitive awareness that what is known as a being is finite and not final. And yet, correlatively, the infinite is the inner reality in the finite, the Unconditional in the conditioned. Things are known; they are not so discontinuous from their essences that nothing can be said of them.

Elements in the dialectical principle may lead one to suppose that it is paradoxical, but in the strict sense such a conclusion is wrong. To be sure, when "a concrete assertion about God is affirmed and negated at the same time" it appears that we have a paradox on our hands. In a sense, we do. In an early essay (1922) Tillich wrote:

> Nun aber gibt es einen Punkt, wo Paradoxie nicht im Subjekt, sondern durchaus im Objekt begründet ist, wo Paradoxie zur Aussage ebenso notwendig gehört, wie Widerspruchslosigkeit zu jeder erfahrungswissenschaftlichen Aussage: Der Punkt, in dem das Unbedingte zum Objekt wird. Denn _dass_ es das wird, ist ja eben die Urparadoxie, da es als Unbedingtes seinem Wesen nach jenseits des Gegensatzes von Subjekt und Objekt steht. Paradoxie ist also die notwendige Form jeder Aussage über das Unbedingte. (FH,367)

Tillich, however, soon saw the dangers of irrationalism in too heavy a reliance on paradox. He later deplored any theological "nonsensical combination of words." (ST I, 151, n.8) He came to insist that Christianity had but one paradox, Jesus as the Christ, which is a new reality, not "a logical riddle." (ST II, 92) His dialectical method and theory of symbols enable him to avoid the irrationalist _cul-de-sac_. For the dialectical method is dynamic while the paradoxical brings the cognitive process to a halt. In the discriminate use of dialectic, some elements are negated, others affirmed - the cognitive process moves ahead. Meanwhile, the symbol theory moves the knower beyond the finality of paradox by the power of symbols to create new cognitive situations, opening new levels of reality. Tillich's dialectical principle, particularly as operative in his symbol theory, is not in the end paradoxical.

In symbol theory the dialectical principle has a direct application, for symbols are figurative expressions for non-figurative realities. Were the realities figurative, symbols would not be necessary; were the symbols not figurative, they would not be symbols. In view of this disjunction, the negative-critical principle is required. A symbol is negated in its "proper meaning." This corresponds to the element of separation in the participation concept.

The clearest statement of Tillich's use of the dialectical principle in the context of his analysis of symbols is as follows:

> Every religious symbol negates itself in its literal meaning, but it affirms itself in its self-transcending meaning. (ST II, 9)

The symbol seeks to present in figurative terms, that which is beyond figure. Hence, its direct, literal element is to be negated. That literal meaning, however, does not exhaust the meaning of the symbol. It is rather the door to its deeper levels - its self-transcending meaning. For there is an inexhaustibility of meaning in a symbol, an element that indicates that previously-defined meanings are not final but that there is more that cannot be limited by definitive terms.

The operation of the dialectic in the symbol theory can be seen in analyzing what it means to say that God loves. The literal meaning is negated, that God is a subject with inner emotions. The self-transcending meaning is affirmed, that God unites the separated, accepting the separation but in a new kind of reconciled relationship. Similarly, in the symbol of the omniscience of God, the literal meaning, that God is a knowing subject, is negated. On the other hand, the meaning that God participates in the known is affirmed. The literal element - and its negation - become the door that opens the way to deeper meanings.

The dialectic of negation and affirmation points to the separation and identity that form the polar elements of the participation-relationship. In itself, the dialectical is not adequate to serve as the comprehensive principle in a symbol theory for it is merely a critical-formal one. Its field of applicability is within the bounds of particular symbols. It can uncover the meanings of symbolic expressions, such as that God loves or that God is indifferent, but it cannot provide a means of judging between them. The dialectic in Tillich's theory of symbols is the formal expression of the participation factor. It demands participation as a material and more comprehensive principle.

One further thing needs to be said about the dialectical principle in this context. In view of our examination of Tillich's appraisal and use of the analogia entis we might suspect that his dialectic would not complete itself with a No and Yes. In the framework of faith and the context of religious symbols, a judging No and a transforming Yes are introduced from the side of the Unconditional: theologically speaking, in revelation. Tillich maintains that when the Spiritual Presence makes itself felt, the self-criticism of the churches in the light of their symbols begins, which is possible "because in every authentic religious symbol there is an element that judges the symbol and those who use it." (ST III, 206) The symbol is not rejected but criticized "and by this criticism it is changed." Hence, within the symbol that "God loves", in the dynamics of religious participation one discovers the presence not only of the negated-literal and affirmed-self-transcending elements but the actuality of the divine agape which negates, infuses and transforms the human elements even in their self-transcendence. From the side of the divine, those elements enter which move symbolic participation from an essential to a religious relationship.

5. The Translucency of Religious Symbols

In analyzing Tillich's symbol theory, Ford uncovers a second interpretative principle, that religious symbols must be transparent. In response to Ford's criticism of the confusions inherent in the passive nature of this principle and of the fact that a transparent object contributes nothing to a perception, Tillich replies that Ford has helped him see a problem in semantics, for what he really meant was that symbols must be translucent.[17] Actually, when Tillich speaks of the "Word of God" as not imparting a "hidden truth," a kind of "information" about "divine matters," he points out that were that the case, "no 'transparency' of language would be needed." (ST I, 124) That is to say, words would not then be required to be windows to that which is beyond words. Clearly, translucency is the term Tillich wants.

If the dialectic of negation and affirmation is the critical-formal expression of the participation principle in Tillich's theory of symbols, translucency is the "material" expression. It is, again, a form of the participation strand in the theory. Its character is most visible in the context of Tillich's discussion of the medium of final revelation. Symbols, after all, are revelatory, ultimately, of the Unconditional.

Every vital occurrence in the event of Jesus as the Christ reveals the transparent-translucent nature which a medium of final revelation must possess. For "that which is unconditional and unchangeable" in final revelation "involves the complete transparency (translucency) and the complete self-sacrifice of the medium in which it appears." (ST I, 151) The law of love is the final law because it is the negation of law in concern for the concrete. The symbol of the Cross is the final symbol because it negates any privileged position of the Christ. Jesus had accepted that title only in view of the forecast that the Christ would suffer and die.

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[17] Paul Tillich, "Reply" in Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966, p.187

The dynamic inter-relationship of holy objects and the holy is another case in point. Holiness cannot be known except through holy objects and figures. These are not holy in and of themselves. "They are holy only by negating themselves in pointing to the divine of which they are the media. If they establish themselves as holy, they become demonic." (ST I, 216) Holiness is not then, inherent in the objects as sainthood is not a power in saints. Rather, saints are saintly and objects holy in their translucency, as bearers of that which is beyond themselves, as participants in that which they do not possess in themselves.

In his examination of this strand in Tillich's theory, Ford discovers three conditions that must be fulfilled for transparency, or translucency, to characterize a religious symbol or medium of revelation. The first two may be reduced to one, a negative condition, in contrast to the third, which is affirmative, to parallel the dialectical and participating strands. In Ford's interpretation, the first condition is freedom from existential distortion, and the second the negation of finitude. In epitomizing these, Jesus reveals himself as the medium of final revelation. The third condition is an intrinsic affinity between mediator and mediated, the symbol and the symbolized.

The use of water in religious rites is a natural example. Its properties have a natural affinity with the religious functions of purification and regeneration. Tillich maintains that "by virtue of this natural power, water is suited to become the bearer of a sacral power and thus also to become a sacramental element." (PE,96) Bread and wine have a similar affinity to their ritual significance in the Lord's Supper. And although the mystery of the Unconditional and wonder of God may be revealed through the medium of a tree or a painting of a tree, it must be through a person that God is finally revealed, for in the person alone are microcosmically present the full elements of the structure of being.

The translucency principle allows for degree. Holy objects and persons may be relatively free from existential distortion, with a relative degree of intrinsic affinity and therefore a relative translucency. In the symbol-event of Jesus as the Christ, the freedom from distortion, negation of finitude and affinity with God are complete. Other participations may be relative; this one is absolute and fulfilled.

One problem bears watching, however; the nature of the intrinsic affinity must be closely observed. If this allows holiness to become a possession of existents, the consequence would be demonic. Tillich's position is that though the sacraments have inherent qualities which make them adequate to their symbolic function, it is not the qualities as such which make them media of the symbolized. (ST III, 123) His theory requires the third strand, of which the first two are but expressions, the relationship of participation.

6. The Participation of Religious Symbols

From the perspective provided by an investigation of the dynamic structure of the participation concept in its various settings in Tillich's thought, we are able to comprehend this central strand in his symbol theory now in relation to his total system. Inasmuch as we have come to understand participation dialectically in its elements of separation and identity, symbolically in a way that includes but transcends causative and substantial categories, and dynamically in relation to both being and meaning, we can appreciate the complexity and significance of the term in the constellation of Tillich's symbol theory.

An example of misunderstanding is evident in William P. Alston's critique. He finds little help in the assertion that religious symbols participate in the reality and power of that to which they point because everything, on Tillich's principles, "constantly participates in being-itself, as a necessary condition of its being anything."[18] Alston's reading of participation is apparently in primitive-substantial terms, a view that each being has its share of an undifferentiated substratum of being, which, as we have seen, is not at all the character of Tillich's ontology. Ford, on the other hand, attempts to define types of participation very precisely. In the process, he concludes that the apparent cogency of Tillich's argument depends on a silent transition from environmental to essential participation. The environmental is the very concrete participation of persons and objects in their environments, or in persons, society, or the past. Essential participation is the abstract relation of a particular to a universal.[19] But we have seen that this latter type is inapplicable to Tillich except as radically re-interpreted.[20] Without an appreciation of Tillich's "transcendent realism", Ford defines the power of symbols only in terms of their connotations and intrinsic affinity. The connotative quality of symbols is the consequence of "environmental participation." Connotations which are extrinsic, can have no appreciable effects on the degree of shared properties between a symbol and that which is symbolized. Hence Ford concludes:

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[18] W.P. Alston, "Tillich's Conception of a Religious Symbol", RET, p.19

> Symbolic participation means nothing more than that the symbol bears associative overtones which the sign does not possess, and that it possibly bears natural resemblances with that which is symbolized. These two meanings are best expressed explicitly and directly, without recourse to the more inclusive (and hence more confusing) concept of participation.[21]

This may be the case for Ford, but it is not for Tillich. Understood from within Tillich's system, symbolic participation points to real power, for it is the power that relates meaning to being.

How does a symbol, in Tillich's terms, participate in the power of that which it symbolizes? Tillich's first answer is that symbolic participation has an indicative function. In answer to a question posed by Walter Kaufmann, who asks about propositions, Tillich says that "symbolic statements about God point to a special quality of the divine life in which it manifests itself to us in an 'ecstatic' experience."[22] Finite terms are used to point to something real in that which transcends finitude. The power in such symbolic statements, or in non-verbal symbols for that matter, is concentrative power, the capacity to make such a quality of the divine life so vivid and visible as to focus attention and awareness. The symbol or symbolic statement is a bridge to effective understanding of the quality that is related, by dialectical transcendence, to qualities known in human experience. Hence statements about the power, love or justice of God, in so far as they are true, bear an inward relation to the qualities they express, for the statements share in the process by which those qualities are brought to one's consciousness in an understandable way.

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[19] L.S. Ford, dissertation, op. cit., p.111-2
[20] pp.123-7 above.
[21] L.S. Ford, dissertation, op. cit., p.182

The second basic answer of Tillich to this question is that symbols are participative in that they have the power to open up both levels of reality and the human soul for an appreciation of deeper meanings. The power of the level of reality being opened must be present in the opening. Every question implies that the questioner both has and has not the answer. Some element of the answer must be present in order that the question can be asked. In this context, the connotations Ford acknowledges have their place. Many words, according to Tillich's analysis, are no more than signs. "Desk" is an example. Another sign would serve the function as well. But there are other words in every language "which are more than this, and in the moment in which they get connotations which go beyond something to which they point as signs, then they can become symbols." (TC,55) In liturgical or poetic language, words have a power achieved through centuries, with "connotations in situations in which they appear so that they cannot be replaced." (TC,56) In their connotative power they suggest levels of meaning beyond the literal. The "holiness of God," or the "peace of God" as symbolic statements, bear connotations, many of which are unconscious, which lead to awarenesses that are beyond conceptualization. Within the statement as it is heard with openness, the power of the symbolized is present.

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[22] In S. and B. Rome, op. cit., p.386

Tillich's third basic answer is that symbols are re-presentative. They have the power of manifesting the reality to which they point. The Unconditional is no distant entity beyond some gulf of consciousness over which the symbol points, but is shown as the depth of every present reality. To be reminded of it is to confront it. In the symbolic character of the sacrament:

> ...the wine becomes the bearer of the presence of God, insofar as he is manifest in the cross of the Christ. It is not merely a sign for the faithful, reminding them of a past event, but it is a vehicle of the experience of the presence of God here and now.[23]

One of the fruits of contemporary liturgical scholarship is the recovery of the meaning of the Eucharistic charge, "This do in remembrance of me," which is seen to be expressed more accurately as "do this for my recalling." _Anamnesis_ is more than memory; it is a re-living, a re-establishment of meanings and relationships. Thus, a symbol is a bearer of the power of the symbolized, under certain conditions. Symbolic participation means nothing less than that.

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[23] Ibid.

Under certain conditions is, however, a crucial phrase in understanding this level of participation. In the passage in which he speaks of the symbolic character of the wine, Tillich does so with a qualification - "in its sacramental use (not outside of it as the Roman Church insists)." Tillich means that sacral power does not remain in the wine as a property, after or apart from the sacramental act itself.

In his opening discussion of symbols, Tillich described one of their characteristics as "acceptability as such," maintaining that a symbol must be socially rooted and supported. A symbol bears its power always "in relation to the community which in turn can recognize itself in it." (RET,302) The sacramental wine is a power-bearing symbol only in the sacramental situation, in the act of a community that recognizes its relationship to it. This qualification has decisive significance for interpreting the participation concept. Symbolic participation has two levels: that of intrinsic affinity and that of representative power.

An analysis of the dynamics operative in actual symbols which Tillich discusses and Ford questions will help clarify the principles involved. Tillich suggests that the flag is a symbol participating in the power of the nation, receiving the honor due to the nation and calling forth the loyalty which the power of the nation itself summons. Ford disagrees, implying that a flag flutters between being a symbol or a sign. For those contemptuous of flag-waving, the most elaborate flag ceremonies mean nothing. For none does a flag "participate" in the real power of a nation which is, Ford maintains, the power to levy taxes and administer justice.

Ford's latter objection is superficial. The power of a nation to levy taxes and administer justice is dependent upon a prior and deeper power - to hold fast the consent and loyalty of its people. The revolutions of the last two centuries have made this unmistakably clear. It is in this determinative power of loyalty and consent that the flag-symbol can participate.

But it can participate only under certain conditions - of acceptability. Ford's former criticism is to the point but the point is included in Tillich's symbol theory. Contempt of the flag may itself be indicative of the disintegration of national power and its inability to call forth loyalty to its national aims and programs, or it may indicate merely that the flag symbol is dying and new symbolic expressions of basic national power, artistic or musical, need to emerge.

Nor does Ford see, in his analysis of the flag-symbol, any "intrinsic affinity" between its properties and those of national power. The concrete contemporary situation can be instructive here. In circles where the use of national flags is declining, the carrying of placards and banners is increasing. A musical parallel is evident among those groups in which national anthems have little significance but the singing of "We Shall Overcome" has symbolic meaning and power as an expression of group aims and loyalties. Flag, banner and song symbols apparently have an intrinsic affinity with the power of a group which requires some focal expression of that "for which it stands."

Similarly, Tillich suggests the king as a symbol. Again, Ford misconstrues its symbolic significance. He grants a measure of participation to the king in so far as he may exercise the actual power of government. This is not the issue. The king as a symbol is the focus of the national esprit, the embodiment of that which underlies the nationhood of the nation. When the king no longer serves that function, is no longer able to make the real national power present, then he is no longer an adequate symbol and needs replacement by another. Historically, kings as hereditary figures and military as well as ceremonial leaders have had "intrinsic affinity" with the national esprit. But that situation no longer holds very widely.

Symbolic participation in the power of the symbolized in these cases involves something more than connotations. It is rooted in the affinity of basic properties of the symbol with those of the symbolized, not crudely but thoughtfully discerned. And it is fulfilled in the positive relation of the symbol to the group involved. James Luther Adams has published a meditation by Tillich on "Water" in which he considers the significance of water as metaphysically understood by Thales and in biblical references, with its dimensions of the chaotic, the infinite and the purifying. Tillich raises a question:

> ...we must ask if the spiritual situation that created the sacraments did not have access to sacramental elements that have since been lost to us and can only be re-discovered by the roundabout ways of mythology and psychoanalysis. If we can obtain access to those elements today, we shall understand that water is not contingently and externally symbolic, but has reached sacramental significance by its own intrinsic power of being.[24]

Nevertheless, in spite of that "intrinsic power of being" water does not possess inherent sacral power apart from the faith and understanding of the group that uses it sacramentally.

Similarly, bread and wine can be seen as "representing the natural powers that nourish the body and support in the human body the highest possibility of nature." (PE,98) In their intrinsic properties they can bear sacramental meaning and power which, for example, coffee and doughnuts do not. Liturgical experiments have tried this kind of substitution, but coffee and doughnuts turn out to be symbols of neighborly fellowship in an affluent society rather than expressions of communion before the mystery of God. Their intrinsic affinities might include the warmth of the coffee and the fact that the doughnuts are sugared. In any case, both intrinsic affinities and connotations are inadequate to the meaning and power of the sacrament. Tillich, in the same article, discerns another meaning in the traditional formula of "word and sacrament." Words may themselves be symbols: "by their natural power (they) are potential bearers of a transcendent power and are suitable for sacramental usage." Tillich speaks here of the fact that sounds and meanings in words may be so bound together as to be almost inseparable. Ford rejects this as irrelevant onomatopoeia but the relations of sounds to meanings comprise an important consideration in poetic and liturgical style. In any case, on yet another level words are symbols in the sacramental situation: for words emerge in the setting of person-to-person encounter. They are the material of communication, the means by which a person is addressed at the highest level of consciousness.

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[24] In J.L. Adams, op. cit., p. 64

Tillich summarizes this relation of symbols, in contrast with signs, to the realities they represent: "Symbols are nearer to the reality expressed in them. Their direct, immediate, non-symbolic nature must have an original affinity to the symbolic content they represent."[25] However, nearness and affinity are not identity. The consistent element of separation in Tillich's understanding of symbolic participation is always to be recognized. This element distinguishes his theory from others, such as those derived from the study of primitive religion.

Lévy-Bruhl analyses reports of investigators in religious anthropology according to the principles of the "pre-logical mentality" of primitive man. The primitive's manner of thought does not follow our patterns, and is not interested in the causal and other logical relationships we use to explain connections in things. Lévy-Bruhl holds that the primitive thinks according to the "law of participation." He is not troubled by the contradictions that disturb us. Lévy-Bruhl states that "in the collective representations of primitive mentality, objects, beings, phenomena can be, though in a way incomprehensible to us, both themselves and something other than themselves." He goes on: "In a fashion which is no less incomprehensible, they give forth and they receive mystic powers, virtues, qualities, influences, which make themselves felt outside, without ceasing to remain where they are."[26] Among Lévy-Bruhl's many examples are the Bororos, a tribe in northern Brazil, who claim to be red araras (parakeets) - not in signification or representation but in actuality. Totem-groups allow multiple identification, of individuals with each other, with the collective unit and with the totem as well. One participates in the other.

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[25] Paul Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge", op. cit., p. 204

Similarly, primitive understanding allows for a participation by things. Sacred objects, such as the churingas of the Aruntas of Central Australia, which are decorated blocks of wood, are vehicles for ancestral spirits and reservoirs of vitality. The mana belief is widespread in primitive religion, a belief in a vital, sacral power inherent in all things. Missionaries have reported on the awesome powers attributed to a picture of Queen Victoria that they had hung in their residence in New Guinea. No sooner had the picture been hung than an epidemic broke out. In the operation of the primitive mentality, the cause of the epidemic was clear - the mystic properties of the imperious picture. From whence does this attribution come, asks Lévy-Bruhl? He answers:

> Evidently from the fact that every picture, every reproduction 'participates' in the nature, properties, life of that of which it is the image. This participation

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[26] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, How Natives Think, trans., London: Allen and Unwin, 1926, pp.76-7

> is not to be understood as a share - as if the portrait, for example, involved a fraction of the whole of the properties or the life which the model possesses. Primitive mentality sees no difficulty in the belief that such life and properties exist in the original and in its reproduction at one and the same time.[27]

Symbolic objects participate directly in the power of that which they symbolize; the power of the symbolized is made immediately present in the object.

The obvious similarities between Lévy-Bruhl's explication of primitive religion and Tillich's symbol theory have caused Zuurdeeg to conclude that Tillich derived his theory from this source. Zuurdeeg fails, however, to note the decisive differences. Already in Das Religiöse Symbol, Tillich writes of the myth-breaking function of the mystical element in religion that forces primitive mythology to point beyond its immediate meaning. (RET,310) In Dynamics of Faith, he expounds his position further, clarifying the difference between a symbol and a primitive myth. He is apparently not a Romantic interested in the repristination of the religious mentality to the some primitive purity. (DF, 48-54)

The difficulty with primitive mythology, in Tillich's view, is that it does not understand its mythological character. The primitive religious mind lives and moves in a state of "natural literalism." Although Tillich's references are to the mythologies of ancient Greece, Persia and India, the cases Lévy-Bruhl analyzes illustrate the same kind of ~~mythical~~ mythological literalism. In the primitive period, individuals and groups are unable to "separate the creations of symbolic imagination from the facts which can be verified through observation and experiment." (DF,52) But soon the mind begins to question the literal acceptance of mythological visions. In view of the threatening uncertainty that follows this kind of question, a second stage of literalism sets in - a "reactive literalism." Questions are repressed under the authority of a church or Bible which has sacred qualities, which demands "unconditional surrender." This stage is, however, religiously distorting. It elevates something conditioned to the level of the unconditional, transgressing the religious demand expressed in the first commandment: "the affirmation of the ultimate as ultimate and the rejection of any kind of idolatry." (DF,51) The unconditional, ultimate dimension in religious experience demands that myths not remain "unbroken" but be "broken," that is to say, that myths now become understood as symbols, pointing beyond themselves. Myths (and symbols) remain central to its language, even as historical rather than natural myths, for we can speak of our ultimate concern only in ~~mythical~~ mythological or symbolic terms. But Christianity is a religion of the "broken myth." A myth must be broken to be true.

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[27] Ibid., pp.79-80, his underscoring

Applying these principles to the "primitive mentality" Lévy-Bruhl has outlined, we find that the participation of individuals in the sacred unity and power of their tribe and the participation of objects in the powers they represent are myths which must be broken. Their natural-literal acceptance must be questioned. Further, their reactive-literal re-evaluation must be avoided, that is to say, the repression of the questioning by the authority of the tribe or the appeal to special theophanies in support of that authority. But once broken, they can be appreciated in their symbolic meaning and power, which can provide elements of religious life and understanding which we have lost, to our impoverishment. The fact is that participation itself is to be understood symbolically, not literally. Participation is not simply a concept; it is itself a conceptual symbol. It is figurative; it points beyond itself, negating its literal meaning and affirming its self-transcending meaning; it is re-presentative in the situation in which it is accepted and understood, the situation of participation.

And yet, like the *Logos*, participation has its conceptual as well as its symbolic side. It is applicable to the resolution of the problems of ontology and cognition. It can speak directly of elements of separation and identity. It describes specifically a way of understanding that includes detachment and existential involvement. The key to understanding the character of participation is discernible in the setting of symbol-theory because in the symbol being and meaning are united.

Here we see again that the questions of being and meaning are the axiological questions of Tillich's entire system of thought. Their congruence in symbols is revealed in the fact that a symbol participates in the meaning of being. The flag, banner or placard, anthem or song derive their power from the meaning as well as the being of the groups they represent. If the group loses its meaning and aim, its symbols disintegrate and its own process of deterioration sets in. When the meaning of the group changes, its symbols change. As long as the symbols are adequate to the meaning of the group, they have power and, in turn, deepen and extend the power-to-be of the group. Sacraments deteriorate when their meaning is lost. But as long as they participate in the meanings of the group, they empower it. Symbols participate in the power of that which they symbolize by imparting the power of its meaning.

But something else happens in the process by which an element of reality becomes a participating bearer of meaning. When a human action or a human life is seen as a bearer of meaning, all human actions and lives are revealed in the light of that possibility. Tillich describes this principle in specifically religious terms. The whole realm of reality from which a symbol for God comes is "so to speak, elevated into the realm of the holy." If God's work is seen as "making whole" or healing, the theonomous character of all healing is made known. (ST I, 241) Symbols impart the power of meaning in which they participate to all realities to which they are related, enhancing their "power to be."

Clearly, Tillich's assertion that symbols participate in the power of that which they symbolize is no peripheral tangent of his thought. It stands at the very center of his system.

7. The Dynamics of Religious Symbolization

Inasmuch as the character of symbols is participative, how are symbols created, replaced or renewed? From whence do they come? What is the power that gives them birth and being?

As we have seen, according to Tillich the source of symbols is the "collective unconscious", that deep, interior source of primal awareness.[28] The experience and self-understanding of groups provide the means of selectivity by which expressions of particular awarenesses are affirmed as meaningful symbols for that group. Even when an individual consciously seeks to create a symbol, it becomes one "only if the unconscious of a group says 'yes' to it." (TC,58) As the experiences and self-understandings of groups change, their symbols change with them. That is why writers and artists are often so prophetic; in their sense of the deterioration of symbols, they seek to project new ones, or at least point dramatically to the degenerating process.

The dynamic nature of this symbol-creating and symbol-destroying process is indicative of the unconditional element in all symbolic expression and in every encounter with reality and its meanings. Poetic and artistic expression are not thereby all "religious" but they can be theonomous in recognition of that element. By their nature, poetic and artistic symbols demonstrate the inexhaustibility in realities and their meanings. Poetic symbols "show in sensory images a dimension of being which cannot be shown in any other way, although like religious language they use the objects of ordinary experience and its linguistic expression." (ST III, 59)

Nevertheless, although the unconditional is present in the dynamics of all symbolization, all symbolization is not religious. Religious symbols are those which point to and participate in our ultimate concern.

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[28] p. 158 above.

As such, related directly to the Unconditional, they can overcome the ambiguities of symbolic communication because the inexhaustibility in both symbol and reality are mutually supportive as essential dimensions of the communicative experience. Tillich discusses this point in the context of the creative activity of the Spiritual Presence: "The word, determined by the Spiritual Presence, does not try to grasp an ever escaping object but expresses a union between the inexhaustible subject and the inexhaustible object in a symbol which is by its very nature indefinite and definite at the same time." (ST III, 254) Language cannot reach the very center of the other self except in the Spirit-determined word, which can penetrate to that center by "uniting the centers of the speaker and the listener in the transcendent unity." (ST III, 255) Religious words and symbols emerge in "ecstasy", the experience of standing outside one's own being. The human word becomes the divine word.

Words and symbols that participate in the Ultimate in this manner are nevertheless not themselves ultimate. They bear the power of ultimacy in the revelatory situation, as they are grasped by the Unconditional but this capacity does not remain a power in them apart from the revelatory event. While one side of a religious symbol is determined by the Unconditional in which it participates, the other side takes character from the historical situation in which it participates, the special encounters with reality of the group that enters the symbol-creating process. Hence, Tillich can speak of religious symbols dying. But they do not die under the attack of scientific or rational criticism; rather, because the historical situation in which they participate is no longer relevant. The veneration of the Virgin is an example Tillich uses, which is a symbol structure that lives in Roman Catholicism but has died among Protestants not because it is not verifiable by empirical reality but because it does not speak to the questions and illuminate the reality-encounters of Protestant groups. (TC, 65-66) New participations require new symbols. That is the basic principle of the dynamics of religious symbolization.

8. Verification of Religious Symbols

For a number of Tillich's critics and interpreters, a very serious question is posed by the kind of dynamics that are operative in his symbol theory: how is a religious symbol verified? On Tillich's principles, would not one symbol be as valid as another? In a continual generative and degenerative process, how can specific symbols really matter?

James Luther Adams asks this question in terms of a "principle of selection." "Among an infinite number of possibilities, which forms (symbols) are the more appropriate?"[29] Tillich's explicit answer, in the first volume of the Systematics is that the theologian deals with the symbols of his own tradition or confession, his own spiritual community, or at least begins there. And yet is not the question a valid one which ~~is~~ presses on to ask which among the various options within one's own religious community will be determinative, and why? Further, in so far as the theologian seeks to communicate with those outside his special tradition, does he not need to undergird his symbols with some reference to transcending principles? Bowman L. Clarke poses the problem in a very practical way: suppose two people hold conflicting symbols as true, both of which point to being-itself - how is one to choose between them?[30] William P. Alston wants a clear non-symbolic criterion by which religious symbols are to be validated, such as making symbolic language "at least partly dependent on doctrines expressed in nonsymbolic terms." The example he uses betrays the impossibility of this approach. The shepherd symbol, he holds, is appropriately used of God on the basis of "the truth of the doctrine that God providentially cares for His creatures."[31] But the doctrine is itself symbolic, as the fact that the creeds were called symbols in the patristic period attests. "Providentially cares" and "His creatures" are symbolic statements. Doctrines offer no cogent way out of the difficulty.

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[29] J.L. Adams, op. cit., p.177

Tillich's answer to these questions begins with the assertion that religious symbols themselves cannot be true or false.[32] They can be termed authentic or inauthentic, adequate or inadequate, divine or demonic but not true or false as conceptual statements can. Nonauthentic symbols are those "which have lost their experiential basis," but are still used for traditional or aesthetic reasons. (RET,10) A symbol is judged first on the basis of its authenticity in speaking in terms of the reality-encounters of the group involved, the particular participation. External criteria are not applicable in the verification of religious symbols. No detached standards can be the court of appeal in judgment among the symbols of different religions or confessions. Tillich holds that "no religious claim can refute another except by applying criteria which are acknowledged by the other religion too."[33] Only factors that are present in both participation-situations are relevant.

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[30] B.L. Clarke, op. cit.,
[31] In RET, p.17
[32] In S. and B. Rome, op. cit., p. 390

A second principle determining the adequacy of religious symbols is the degree to which "it reaches the referent of all religious symbols." (RET,10) This principle might be more properly described as the principle of conformation to the symbol Gestalt: the symbol is judged in terms of its capacity for self-negation in its literal meaning. On this basis, Tillich sees the cross as the paradigmatic symbol in that through the cross Jesus negated himself as a bearer of divine power beside God. A symbol is authentic and adequate in so far as it avoids demonic distortion. Tillich summarizes the verification of symbols in this way:

> They are not true or false in the sense of cognitive judgments. But they are authentic or inauthentic with respect to their rise; they are adequate or inadequate with respect to their expressive power; they are divine or demonic with respect to their relation to the ultimate power of being.[34]

The principle of distinction between the demonic and the divine is not, for Tillich, simply a formal principle, but a material one, the third for judging symbols. The criterion, he writes in answer to Walter Kaufmann, is "whether their implications are destructive or creative for personality and community."[35] The criterion here is not to be applied, again, from the outside in detachment, but is experienced in the life-processes, in the dynamics of participation in them.

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[33] Paul Tillich, "Word of God" in R.N. Anshen (ed.), Language: Its Meaning and Function, New York: Harper and Bros.,1957, p.131

[34] In Will Herberg, op. cit., p. 322

[35] In S. and B. Rome, op. cit., p. 387

A criticism by Paul Weiss draws attention to the fourth principle of verification that Tillich finds operative in judging the value of religious symbols. Weiss finds that Tillich does not clearly state "his appreciation of the truth that not all symbols are on a footing, and that even apart from all revelation it is possible to recognize some to be better than others." In Weiss' estimate, "some things are more open than others to the influence of exterior realities; some things mirror what lies outside them better than others do."[36]

Tillich accounts for these factors by speaking of the criterion of "quality" in symbolic material. There is a qualitative difference between the use as symbols of rocks, trees or animals on the one hand, and personalities and groups on the other. Only those symbols drawn from human experience have the capability of expressing "the whole of reality." Tillich's consistent principle comes into play here, that "only in man are all dimensions of the encountered world united." (RET,11) Only man is the microcosmos; only he participates in full degree in the ontological polarities. Only man can participate both in essential being and conscious meaning. Thus the personal and historical symbols are those which are most adequate for pointing to the full scope of reality and, particularly, ultimate reality.

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Symbols are judged, then, according to the authenticity of their participation in the reality-encounters of the groups involved in them, in their capacity for self-negation in pointing to their participation in the power of the symbolized, in their destructive or creative consequences, and in the fullness of their participation in the structures of being. In a way similar to the verification principles in Tillich's theory of cognition, participation bridges the gap between the pragmatic and experiential and the structural or ontological dimensions of the truth-valuation process.

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[36] Paul Weiss, in RET, p.87

9. Symbolic, Analogical or Participative Predication

Tillich is not always clear about the significance of the concept of analogy in his thought. While we have already examined his basic re-appraisal of this concept along lines firmly implanted in his system,[37] his occasional allusions to the medieval analogia entis can be misleading. In response to Ford's concern that "it becomes difficult to understand just what is meant by participation" in Tillich's use,[38] Tillich claims that he uses participation to sharpen the distinction between sign and symbol and to express the validity of the medieval doctrine of analogy, which affirms a positive point of identity between the symbol and the symbolized.[39] The parallel is again affirmed when Tillich writes of the necessity of balancing the via eminentiae with the via negativa which find their unity in the via symbolica.[40]

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[37] pp. 91-6 above.

[38] L.S. Ford, "Tillich and Thomas: the Analogy of Being", Journal of Religion, v. 46, 1966, p.242

[39] Paul Tillich, "Reply" in Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966,p.188

[40] In Kegley-Bretall, op. cit., p. 334

In his symbol theory, the parallels become clear, for symbols, like analogies, say what they mean neither univocally nor equivocally. In the critiques of Tillich's symbol theory, from both Thomist and process-philosophy positions, the differences emerge as well.

Analogical predication requires certain ontological conditions, which are defined both by Ford and George F. McLean who compare Tillich and Thomas Aquinas on the matter. The predication to God of attributes or properties discernible in man and his experienced world demands not only a continuity between the being of things, man and God but also a similarity, in what we might call the strict application of analogy. The doctrines of analogy, as Ford and McLean develop them, conflate continuity and similarity. Not only does a continuity in the being of man and God subsist, but there is a similarity in their natures as well. Thus Ford believes that Tillich's principle that God is not a being is "his fundamental error."[41] In this development of the analogia entis, both God and man are beings, however much God transcends man in his power, goodness, love, etc. Ford goes on to contend that Tillich uses the doctrine of analogy only up to and including man. Between man and God a radical break or an ultimate discontinuity is introduced which destroys any real possibility of participation or analogical predication. It is not entirely beside the point to recall that from the Barthian perspective, Tillich's error is said to be that he does not fully appreciate the "infinite qualitative difference" between God and man.

The fact of the matter is that Tillich affirms the continuity between man and God but rejects the idea of similarity. The basic continuity between beings and Being-itself obtains. It is grounded in the power-of-being. Being-itself is the ground and power of being in Tillich's ontology; man has the power-to-be by participation. This is the element of identity, although not univocal identity, to be sure.

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[41] L.S. Ford, "Tillich and Thomas", op. cit., p. 243

But once Tillich makes this affirmation, he couples it with an insistence on the radical dis-similarity between man and God, a being and Being-itself. The classic version of the analogia entis projects the limitation of human and natural selfhood on God which Tillich rejects, as we have seen, from two standpoints. The structure of being as grounded in an unconditionally transcendent being-itself demands that statements about finite beings cannot be predicated literally of the infinite. Further, man's encounter with the Holy forbids the attribution of human characteristics to the divine. Such attribution becomes demonic.

On this basis we can distinguish Tillich's via symbolica sharply from both the "analogy of attribution" and the "analogy of proper proportionality." Ford himself agrees that the former is of no value in making any definitive or significant assertions about God. By predicating a property directly and properly of the prime analogate and derivatively of the other, it provides no principle of selectivity. God as the cause of the physical universe must be virtually hot, powdered, molten, impervious, multi-colored, etc. The principle of "proper proportionality" which Ford allows, predicating the same property in both but in ways proportionate to their natures, contains its difficulty directly in its label.

It implies not only continuity but similarity. God's attributes are human, raised to the ^{nth} power. The infinite is an extended form of the finite, a principle which makes the finite determinative. Although some contemporary interpreters claim that Aquinas himself carefully maintained an emphasis on the dissimilarity between the divine and the human in his thought which would indicate a real affinity with Tillich's view, the majority of interpreters remain in the tradition of classical Thomism as exemplified by Cajetan. In any case, Aquinas must be recognized on the side of similarity between man and God on the key issue, whether or not God can be conceived as a being. The version of analogy Ford accepts is driven to introduce an artificial stopping-point to keep the analogies from going beyond God. They must introduce the "two-term analogy" principle to withhold the argument from its natural conclusion, that man and God both participate in *esse* which is beyond both.

McLean is troubled by the subjective dimension of Tillich's *via symbolica*. He believes that Tillich's analysis of the origin and function of the symbol is inadequate in that it places too great an emphasis on the encounter of man with reality. Symbols have no corrective principle, in this situation.[42] But as we have seen, although no "principle" is present in terms of defined propositions, the correctives of the life-process, the *Gestalt* of symbols, and the necessity of pointing to the Unconditional are operative in Tillich's theory. McLean sees the gulf between Tillich's symbol theory and Thomas' doctrine of analogy as crucial for the Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue, because the main differences in that encounter are reducible to the varying answers to "the one basic philosophical question of whether the created can participate in the divine." McLean maintains that "The Church answers in the affirmative and proceeds to interpret ecclesiastical authority, the internal life of grace, and the sacraments as forms of this participation. Protestantism has answered in the negative and proceeds to reject each of these doctrines."[43]

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[42] G.F. McLean, "Tillich and Thomas" in O'Meara and Weisser, op. cit., p. 159

Both McLean and Ford use participation in the meaning it carried in the mind of Aquinas. That meaning comes under the category of the mythological: man's participation means that he has a share of God's being, of the divine esse. In the thought of Tillich, however, this mythology is "broken", its literal meaning negated and its symbolic meaning put forward: man's participation means that he is involved in the meaning of God's being, and hence can have the power truly to be. Symbolic predication might contain the possibility of moving forward the dialogue of which McLean speaks.

Charles Hartshorne approaches the question of analogical predication from quite another perspective, claiming not to see any advantage in the term "symbolic" over "analogical." Hartshorne distinguishes three kinds of predication possible. Metaphorical predication takes one element of natural or human experience and applies it to God, as when God is said to be a shepherd. Obviously, this could not be literal in meaning for God cannot be identified with one aspect of his creation.

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[43] Ibid., p. 146

A difficulty with this kind of statement is that other points of reference are required. In itself, metaphorical predication is indiscriminate. Some principle must be introduced to determine why the metaphor "shepherd" may be allowed while "criminal" may not.

Analogical predication, as Hartshorne analyzes it, broadens the metaphorical to the point of universality, in a term such as "God is powerful." "Here a term which applies universally to the creatures is used, obviously in an eminent sense, of God."[44] The terms are not now mere metaphors because of the dimension of universality. But they are not literally applicable either, because of the transcendence of God. God is not "powerful" in the same sense we are. Hartshorne equates this method with Tillich's symbolic predication.

Hartshorne wants to include more statements in the category of literal predication than does Tillich. Tillich, as we have seen, allows only one, that God is Being-itself. Hartshorne prefers "reality-itself" although that has misleading pantheistic overtones. His meaning is that God is the Reality of reality, and there is actually no quarrel with Tillich on this point, beyond terminological preferences. But Hartshorne goes on: why cannot such terms as "potentiality" and "actuality" be applied literally to God? These are universally discernible and ontologically grounded. They are direct and not metaphorical in character. Why does Tillich resist their predication of God?

Tillich has two direct reactions to Hartshorne's analysis of these kinds of predication. First and more immediate, he insists on rejecting any literal application of "potential" and "actual" categories to God for that would subject the divine life to the structure of finitude. In such a case, God would not be God. At this point, Tillich agrees with the "scholastic theologians" of both Roman Catholic and Protestant Orthodoxy. God is not to be subject to the temporality of becoming. Nevertheless, his sympathies with the strain of Western thought in Boehme, Schelling and Henri Bergson, who have "successfully turned against the actus-purus doctrine" lead him to acknowledge that this is not all that need be said.[45] The structure of being is obviously dynamic. To use the symbol "divine life" is to acknowledge that an element of becoming must be included in a doctrine of God. Therefore Tillich holds that if "being-itself" were statically understood, the ultimate principle must be "becoming." Becoming, on the other hand, when only understood dynamically, loses its ultimacy for it is then without a necessary continuity between the being at the beginning and the being at the end of the process. The result is that Tillich affirms God as beyond every finite process in which he would be a risk to himself: God is beyond the polarity of being and becoming.

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[44] In S. and B. Rome, op. cit., p. 374

Tillich's second reaction is against the method of analogical predication as Hartshorne explicates it. That method "points to a static, calculable relation between the world and God, which can be rationally verified, as in traditional 'natural theology.'"[46] Attributes and properties universally derived are given a transcendent re-evaluation and predicated of God in a manner too close to the literal. Tillich therefore voices his preference for the "symbolic" rather than the "analogical" because "in'symbolic', the symbol-creating and -destroying activity of man's spiritual life is presupposed." The focus on creative reality-encounters of persons and groups is much closer to the nature of life-processes and the dimension of the unconditional. What is more, the symbol-creating and -destroying characteristic in this view is more obviously rooted in the dynamics of man's relation to the Holy. Hartshorne opens the door to this dimension when he speaks of our having "direct intuition" of the divine caring, faint as it may be, which enables us to understand human love and its deficiencies more clearly. But the dominant framework of his position is analogical predication. Tillich's position, on the other hand, centers on the experiential elements, using the universal derivations in their explication.

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[45] Ibid., p. 376
[46] Ibid., p. 376-7

And yet, is Tillich's theory as subjective as McLean interprets it? The validation of symbols does not rely on their interior valuations after all, but on their capacity to bear meaning in the life of groups as well as persons, in relation to a total view of existence. The fact is that the via symbolica is really a way of participation; its predication is participative predication, involving all of the dimensions of participation, ontological, existential, religious-receptive, historical, creative. Its points of reference are not only in the human psyche or the "collective unconscious" but in the historical situation, the ontological structure, and the encounter with God. The method of participative predication is inclusive of the validity in the medieval analogia entis but it can also allow for an understanding of historical and personal conditions and their relevance for assertions about God as well as for the divine transcendence which the medieval doctrine appears to compromise. There is an issue between them in method; but there is also an issue in the doctrine of the nature of God.

10. The Symbol of the Personal God

The difficulty of many interpreters and critics of Tillich's theology is a failure to appreciate the force and significance of his assertion that God is a symbol. Having examined the dynamics and structure of Tillich's symbol theory from the perspective of its key principle of participation, we can approach this assertion with, perhaps, some expectation of understanding its meaning.

The surface view that seems to present itself in Tillich's works is that for him divinity is ultimately Being-itself and that God is something less. God as a person is the projection of the human mind that wants, or needs, to relate to Being-itself, or that wants or needs to pray. Many statements in Tillich's writings appear to lend support to this interpretation. Indeed, Tillich insists that this continues to happen in religious experience. The Ultimate is objectified. God is seen as a person subject to the subject-object dichotomy, which makes him less than God. In his early article on symbol theory, Tillich makes a prophetic statement as he describes the changes that have taken place in the symbol of God:

> The idea of God has, by misuse through objectification, lost its symbolic power in such measure that it serves

> largely as a concealment of the unconditioned transcendent rather than as a symbol for it. (RET,320)

But Tillich's point is not that God as a symbol is something less than real; it is that God as a person is something less than ultimate. The significance of his view can be seen by recalling the principle of the broken myth. That God is a person is a myth that needs to be broken, to be adequate and authentic. That is not to say that the ~~mythical~~ mythological statement is not true: it is not true literally, and distorts truth if literally understood, but it can be true symbolically in so far as it points beyond itself. Where does the myth point, when broken? What, in other words, is its meaning?

When broken, the myth of God being a person symbolizes the fact that God is personal. He is the ground of personal as well as non-personal reality and hence must be more than impersonal. God is not less than a person; he is more. God is more than a being; in fact, God is more than Being-itself. Tillich writes: "We could not be in communication with God if he were only 'ultimate being.'" (TC,61) God is not simply the intensity of being, the actus purus, ipsum esse, although all these terms point to the unconditional dimension without which he would not be God.

The statement that God is a symbol points to God as the unity of being and meaning. Its significance is that in God we find the meaning of Being-itself. Persons and things can be, and can be grounded in being even consciously, without realizing meaning, without purpose or aim other than their own being. The deepest level of ultimate concern is not simply concern over being but over the meaning of being, for in spite of being one can yet confront the threat of non-being in meaninglessness. The unconditional can be merely an ontological term, indicating a dimension of being. As such, it is open to a relationship by which a man affirms the unconditional but does not realize meaning in his life. As Tillich has stated, the Unconditioned is not God.

God is more than the Unconditioned. He is the ground of the meaning of being: the meaning of self-transcendence. The symbolism of God means that God is the self-transcendence of Being-itself. Symbolic participation is its corollary: man participates not only in Being-itself, the power of being, but in the meaning of being as well. His participation in that meaning is the source of his power to be. Tillich writes: "in our relationship to this Ultimate we symbolize and must symbolize." (TC,61)

Were God only a being, he would, as Tillich reminds us, need to ask the question of his meaning, asking himself, "Why am I?", as Kant had shown. God is more than a being and more than Being-itself. Thus prayer, in Tillich's understanding, is not only a method of communication, although that is included; it is also an acknowledgement of a presence. It involves not only a being-there but a meaning-there. At its deepest level, prayer is a participation in the meaning of Being-itself.

11. Symbolic Participation

The power of religious symbols, in Tillich's theory, is not to be underestimated. Symbols participate in the power of that which they symbolize. David Kelsey writes that religious symbols in Tillich's view are thus actually miracles which mediate healing power to persons and to groups. The power of a symbol can be to heal the anxiety of unanswered questions, unite persons in mutual communication, empower persons and groups to fulfill their potentials because they know, through their symbols, the power of their meaning.

The character of this participation, as with the nature of the relationship in other constellations in Tillich's system, is neither substantial nor causative. Symbolic participation includes these categories but transcends them, because it transcends the categories of being in its participation in meaning.

In their participation in meaning, symbols find power. This is reflected in a sentence of Tillich's about the Word of God symbol: "The 'Word of God' does not aim to give information, but its aim is to effect a transformation."[47] Meaning has the power of summoning being to self-transcendence, of extending and deepening the horizons of beings.

In the participation-relationship this power of meaning is imparted. Within participation persons find healing, encouragement, the impulse to create, embody and test symbolic realities, and thereby to change the character of the kairos in which they live. These are foreshadowings of the fuller and more complete participation - in the New Being itself.

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[47] In R.N. Anshen (ed.), op. cit., p. 129

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPATION IN EXISTENCE AND THE NEW BEING

Arriving at the discussion of the New Being manifest in Jesus as the Christ, we sense that we are at the pivotal point in Tillich's system. His analysis of reality moves from essence in transition to existence. It is under the conditions of existence that the crucial corner is turned, with the introduction of the new reality and its consequences. The system is given its shape by the three pillars that support it: Being and God on the one side, Existence and the Christ in the center, Life and the Spirit on the other side. The other supporting columns, Reason and Revelation before and History and the Kingdom of God after, have perhaps less prominence but the same center. In early writings, Tillich speaks of the Christ as the "center of history"; in one of his latest, discussing the dialogue of Christians with adherents of other world religions, he maintains that "it is natural and unavoidable that Christians affirm the fundamental assertion of Christianity that Jesus is the Christ and reject what denies this assertion."[1] The basic human quest in the contemporary situation in Tillich's estimate is the quest for New Being; the basic answer, that the New Being is come in Jesus as the Christ. We are here at the "central,""fundamental," "pivotal" point in Tillich's thought. Wolfhart Pannenberg recalls Tillich's criticism of Barth's position as "exclusive christocentrism" but goes on to say that the alternative Tillich offers is an "inclusive christocentrism."[2]

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[1] Paul Tillich, Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 29

In view of this, it should be no surprise to find that participation achieves a new fullness of realization in the Christological setting. Here the elements of separation and identity reach a new resolution; here the axiological principles of being and meaning that determine the reality of participation, intersect. Up to this point, our analysis of this relationship has been predominantly formal, in terms of principles in the relation of beings to being, knower to known and symbols to realities. From this point on, however, the fundamentally existential character of participation is manifest and the quality of the relationship is seen to be more "material" than formal. The inherent potentialities of this conceptual symbol are here to be seen in their realization. In a way reminiscent of Augustine, the participations of persons and things are to be understood as reflections of the Ultimate Participation of Jesus Christ.

In order to comprehend the meaning of participation in this context, we shall need first to review the existential background in which Tillich's Christology is set. The character of both the divine participation in the conditions of human existence and human participation in the New Being can then be described. We have traced the philosophic background of participation in Western thought.[3] We need also to examine its biblical bases if we are to comprehend all Tillich's sources for this concept. George Tavard has been shocked by the manner in which he feels Tillich's entire

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[2] W. Pannenberg, Review of STIII in Dialog, v.4, 1965, p.231
[3] Chapter I above.

Christology denigrates Chalcedon and is, in his view, true neither to the Reformers nor to the Church Fathers, pointing to a Protestantism that is coming to light only in the twentieth century, which can hardly be called authentic.[4] Father Tavard has not questioned seriously enough the possibility that the decisive influences on Tillich's Christology may be from the New Testament itself. This possibility we must investigate.

The manner in which Tillich's Christology relates to the quests, old and new, for the historical Jesus has received wide discussion. From the standpoint of our task, namely, developing an appreciation of the significance of participation, we can expect to find new illumination on the manner in which the Jesus of history can be the foundation of the Christ of faith. We can then review the manner in which Christological participation in Tillich fulfills the meaning and power of the conceptual symbol that we are finding so fundamental to his thought.

1. The Estrangement of Existence

In Tillich's view, the human condition is one of existential disruption. Man is in a state of estrangement from his essential being. He is fallen, having turned from his pure potentiality. The very nature of being human involves the double awareness reflective of this situation. On the one hand, man has an essential nature basic to his being known or conceived as man. A model of what it is to be human is presupposed in every significant analysis of man. A model stands behind even Kierkegaard's assertions that man is what he becomes through his decision, that it is not proper to speak of humanity apart from the individual, that only an individual fulfills the potentiality of becoming human "in the task of becoming a self." On the other hand, any realistic view of man must include an awareness of man's alienation from his essence or potential, the distance that has opened up between himself and his nature. In highly symbolic terms, Tillich speaks of man in existence as estranged from his essential being, fallen from the state of "dreaming innocence."

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[4] G. H. Tavard, op. cit., p. 162

Tillich makes no attempt to avoid, by superficiality or subterfuge, the traditional Christian ambiguity about the Fall. He is quite explicit in insisting that man is responsible for his estrangement. Were estrangement imposed on him, God would be a demon and man a tragic figure, with no possibility of escape from his fate. On the contrary, were estrangement entirely the result of a choice that could have been different, man becomes idealized and God irrelevant because he is unnecessary. Tillich attempts to avoid the dangers and preserve the values of the ambiguity by use of the symbol of the transcendent Fall. The logic in this symbol is that the created have the freedom of turning away from the creative ground of their being. (ST II, 8) The full possibility of actualizing that freedom under the conditions of existence, would not emerge unless the option to turn away had been exercised. The freedom to re-unite is not actualized until the decision to separate has been taken.

The condition of estrangement under which man lives and moves is, then, the consequence of his sin and the cause of his guilt. The estrangement has the expressions of un-belief, hubris, and concupiscence. Unbelief is a turning away from God with the totality of one's being, which causes "the disruption of man's cognitive participation in God." (ST II, 47) Hubris is the centering of man in himself, outside the divine center to which he essentially belongs. In concupiscence, man seeks to draw his entire world into himself in his insatiable desire. These actual expressions of estrangement set in motion the "structures of self-destruction" which bring on the disintegration of both self and world, undermining the polarities of individualization and participation, dynamics and form, freedom and destiny. The consequences are man's loneliness, conflict, and suffering, eventuating in the despair in which "man has come to the end of his possibilities." (ST II, 75) Obviously, man seeks release from this intolerable condition - his quest is for the New Being which would not be subject to these "destructive structures." But in so far as his seeking proceeds along the lines of some form of self-salvation, even though it may be religious in that it may seek saving power through participation in sacramental acts, all forms of self-salvation distort and disrupt, leading him into ever profounder despair.

Although Tillich sees a foreshadowing of this doctrine of the transition from essence to existence in the Platonic theory of a fall from the world of Ideas to that of appearances, he is quite explicit about the distinctions between the Greek and Christian views of man. In his early dissertation on Schelling, he underscores the crucial nature of Schelling's discovery that mystical union was not possible for man if the Augustinian sense of human guilt were acknowledged. (FH, 13-108) In The Courage to Be, he notes that the presupposition of Socratic and Stoic courage is the ability of every individual to belong to both temporal and eternal orders, an assumption which is not accepted by Christianity which insists that "we are estranged from our essential being...; we are not free to realize our essential being, we are bound to contradict it." (CB, 169-70) Man cannot find the way out of this situation from inside it. Guyton B. Hammond distinguishes Tillich's position from Eric Fromm's by describing Fromm's view that estrangement is a fact within the self while in Tillich it pervades the self and its relationships totally:

> Not only man's individuality (in whatever form) but also his participation (in whatever form) has become estranged; indeed, when one is estranged, so is the other, for they are polar characteristics in man.[5]

Again, the solution cannot emerge from within the self.

In his discussion of the transition from essence to existence, Tillich has also confronted the persistent question of the fall of the natural order. A Platonic world-view can easily account for the obvious signs of estrangement in the animal world, for example, by a theory of the inherent imperfection of the natural order. Such a view can hardly be reconciled, in the Christian tradition, with the Judaeo-Christian valuation of the creation as intrinsically the good work of its good Creator. Tillich's answer relies on the participation concept. Man and nature participate in one another. (ST II, 43) This is true not only of their limitations, in their physical and biological being, but in their possibilities, for in view of the continuity of his being with the natural world, man in his freedom brings the potentials of natural being to the point of their realization. The reverse is equally true. The natural world, in continuity with man's being, is disrupted by his disruption. An immediate objection is that the natural order precedes man; man is its culmination. Its characteristics can shape his, but not vice versa; the process is not reversible. The answer in Tillich's system is that such an argument is founded on a crudely evolutionist presupposition. The fall is transcendent, thus prior to all time. The full structure of creation is implicit in all of its sectors. The creation and the transition from essence to existence happens before time, above time and in every moment of time. God creates "here and now" and "everything he has created participates in the transition..." (ST II, 44)

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[5] G.B. Hammond, Man in Estrangement, op. cit., p. 174

Eugene H. Peters has asked, among others, whether Tillich's doctrine of transition is really a fall or a rise.[6] Tillich's essences are really potentials. Existence is actuality. Is not actuality, in spite of its imperfections, an advance over mere potentiality? What valuation after all could be placed on the state of "dreaming innocence"? The answer in Tillich's system must be Yes and No. Man's hostility toward God, actualized in existence, proves that he belongs to him; man's estrangement implies that he is not a stranger to his true being, according to Tillich. (ST II, 45) The reality of man's belonging to God becomes clear only where it is urgent. In this sense, the transition is an advance. But in view of the destructive consequences of the estrangement and hostility, the transition is surely no unmitigated advance; its destructiveness clearly demands the symbol of the Fall.

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[6] E.H. Peters, "Tillich's Doctrine of Essence, Existence and the Christ", Journal of Religion, v.43, 1963, pp.295-302

The dialectic nature of the transition is also manifest in Tillich's discussion of man's centeredness. Estrangement in its basic expressions, unbelief, hubris and concupiscence, is the consequence of man's false centeredness, apart from God, in himself. And yet it is only man in centeredness who is able to "participate in his world without limits; and love, as the dynamic power of life, drives him toward such participation." (ST II, 71) Tillich is careful to point out that finitude in essence is not evil. The centeredness which expresses itself as aloneness in the finitude of man is not in itself evil or destructive; on the contrary, it underlies the possibilities of love and reconciliation. However, finitude in estrangement is destructive. Such finitude distorts and disrupts and must be valuated in terms of a Fall.

Man in existence is estranged from his essential being. He is caught in the "structures of destruction." He longs for New Being, but seeks it in the wrong places. The paradox of Christianity (and the only one, in Tillich's view), is that into this situation God has come - to participate and to overcome.

2. Divine Participation in Existence

The answer to the situation of the estrangement of existence is participation. That answer has two sides: the divine participation in the conditions of human existence and human participation in the power of the New Being. The second is the consequence of the first.

The paradox of Jesus as the Christ is not a paradox of the concurrence of divine and human natures, but rather is that "he who is supposed to overcome existential estrangement must participate in it and its self-destructive consequences." Tillich continues: "This is the central story of the Gospel." (ST II, 97)

Tillich stresses this participation in order to preserve the "Jesus-character of the Christ," along with those who have historically sought to oppose the monophysite tendency by taking seriously the participation of Jesus in man's existential predicament. He attacks the so-called "high" Christologies that in attempting to emphasize the greatness of the Christ minimize his participation in finitude and life's tragic structures. Such "high" Christologies are of "low value" because they seek to eliminate the paradox for the sake of a supernatural miracle. Tillich insists:

> ...salvation can be derived only from him who fully participated in man's existential predicament, not from a God walking on earth, "unequal to us in all respects." (ST II, 147)

The usual formulation of the doctrine of the Incarnation comes under Tillich's strictures. Christian theologians, he reminds us, cannot maintain that there is anything uniquely Christian about the concept, which appears in primitive religions as well as in the more advanced forms of Hinduism and Buddhism. In this presentation, the incarnation idea is but a part of the unbroken mythologies which Christian thought must supersede. God is not a being, for Tillich, who can have a "nature" that can become incarnate in a human nature.

There is, however, one way in which the incarnation concept can be used: in the sense in which the Johannine Gospel uses it - that the Logos became flesh, the fundamental principle of meaning in the universe is embodied in a human life. God in his self-objectification participates in that which is estranged from him. (ST II, 95) The form in which Tillich states the doctrine is that the essential God-manhood unity appears in the life of Jesus, which is to say that God in his unity with the structure of being which man has the capacity to realize, becomes actualized in a person. The meaning of being is fulfilled in him, under the conditions of existence. A myth such as the virgin birth is no longer relevant for this view; in fact, it undermines it, for one who has no human father is deprived of full participation in the human situation. (ST II, 160) It is a highly symbolic phrase, Tillich admits, but that God "'participates' in the agony and tragedy of human life" is the central affirmation of the Christian Gospel.[7]

In precisely what manner does God, through this God-manhood unity, participate in the destructive consequences of human existence? Does the participation involve the alteration, perhaps the curtailment of his power-of-being? Does it enhance or deepen or fulfill, as human participations do? Of course, the answer to these suggestions is negative; were God curtailed or fulfilled by participation in human existence, he would not be God, he would not have aseity.

Analogous to this divine participation might be the participation of artists or theologians, as Tillich speaks of them, in the contemporary situation. Tillich is drawn to modern art, particularly of the expressionist style, by the manner in which the artists are capable of immersing themselves in the meaninglessness of our contemporary existence, participating in its despair. (CB,147) The artist lives through the situation from the inside and shares its meanings, that is to say, he proceeds along the many roads that lead nowhere in contemporary life. But in portrying the meaninglessness, Tillich says, he conquers it, for he finds meaning at least in this, in the seeing and the communicating of the nothingness he uncovers.

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[7] S. and B. Rome (eds.) op. cit. p. 379

In a similar way, Tillich challenges the theologian to participate in the human predicament, in the situation from which emerges the question he must seek to answer out of the resources of his theological circle. (ST II, 15) To participate in that situation is to share the agony of its quest, the pain of its frustrations. Only then will it be possible for him to speak in a way to be heard. Only as he shares the inner meanings of the contemporary milieu, can he seek to change them. One person participates in another or in a situation not entirely his own, by sharing the meanings of that other or that situation.

In an analogous way, through the essential God-manhood, God in Jesus the Christ participates in more than the facts of human finitude: he participates in the meanings of human estrangement. The Gospel reports about Jesus as the Christ make clear "the unbreakable unity of his being with that of the ground of all being, in spite of his participation in the ambiguities of human life." (ST I, 135) The unity was disrupted neither by the ambiguity of the temptations nor the threat of the cross.

In no case did Jesus the Christ live, decide and act with his centeredness outside the centeredness of God; in no situation did he submit to the temptations of unbelief, hubris or concupiscence. Actually, Tillich might well stand corrected by the implications of his own doctrine when he speaks of an "unbreakable unity." Jesus would not have been tempted were his unity unbreakable. It was breakable but unbroken.

The divine participation in Jesus the Christ is a full participation in the meaning of finitude. Tillich maintains that Jesus was finite and that the New Being could not be actual in him were he not. In his finitude, he was open, by implication, to error: "error belongs to the participation of the Christ in man's existential predicament." (ST II, 131) He was the truth about man, but that is not to say that he knew the truth about all things and persons. He is subject to uncertain judgment, risks, the limits of power and "the vicissitudes of life." But as we have seen, finitude is not evil. Jesus participated in finitude; God in unity with him participated in its meanings.

In his finitude, Jesus as the Christ participated in the tragic element of existence, with his actions having unintended consequences that were inevitable in view of the destructive structures of existence. His conflict with his enemies, for example, was tragic though not because of any "split" in his personal center. Rather, he was tragically responsible for the guilt of those who rejected him for his presence made his enemies inescapably guilty. (ST II, 133) Were he misconstrued as a God walking on earth, he could not have participated so thoroughly in the conditions of human life.

As bearer of the New Being, Jesus the Christ does not stand above finitude, anxiety, ambiguity and tragedy, but takes "the negativities of existence into unbroken unity with God." (ST II, 134) He takes homelessness and insecurity and loneliness into that unity, finding a place that is no place but every place in which to be at home, and a communion that is enduring. He takes the anxiety of having to die into that unity, that it may become participative in the will of God and his creative purpose. Even error and doubt are drawn into the unity, in a certainty that need not be fanaticism. All of this is to say that Jesus suffered, which is the only way in which he could participate completely in existence. And yet Tillich holds that neither the death of Christ nor the sufferings of Christians can really be termed tragic in the classic sense, for they are not rooted in the attempt to affirm their greatness but in the cause of participating in the predicament of estranged man. (ST III, 244) What is more, that participating has the character of victory.

Jesus the Christ, as the pictures of him in the New Testament develop, is not only the bearer of the New Being in its participation in the conditions of human existence, but in its power over them. Both sides receive emphasis in the different portrayals. (ST II, 136) The miracles he performed were conquests over some of the evils of existential self-destruction, in the power of the New Being. Tillich is cognizant of the fact that these are not finally conquered in the miracles, for the persons who were healed were subject again to those destructive structures. Nevertheless, the miracles were real; what happened in them "was a representative anticipation of the victory of the New Being over existential self-destruction." Jesus performed them "because he fully participates in the misery of the human situation and tries to overcome it wherever the occasion offers itself." (ST II, 160-1) But these victories are fragmentary. The miracles, of course, in Tillich's view, are not demonstrations to prove his messianic power. As such, they would be failures.

To draw out the implications of the axiological principles we have seen operative throughout Tillich's system, we could say that the dynamic of the New Being is in breaking the power-to-be of the evils of existential destruction by conquering their disintegrating meanings. Bondage to demonic powers is seen to be not ultimate as it appears, and is conquered in surrender to the New Being, which means release from the bondage of those existential structures. The situation of bearing alone the misery of pain, or the torture of guilt or the pall of despair in their ever deepening power, is broken by the participation of the New Being in human being and the full meaning of living under the conditions of human existence.

This elaboration of the axiological principles moves Tillich's argument along steps he does not take, to be sure. The justification of this kind of projection must be in the consistency in which these principles can be seen to operate at the foundation-levels of his system of thought. On this basis, the projection can be supported.

Further, on this basis, one of the nagging inner conflicts of Christian theological thinking can be seen to have a solution. The dialogue between Daniel Day Williams and Tillich has revived in our own day the patripassianist controversy of the Church Fathers. Williams questions how in Tillich's understanding, God can in Christ participate in existential estrangement "and yet not take an element of suffering into the divine life itself."[8] For Williams, the affirmation that God suffers is deeply rooted in the biblical tradition; God is affected by the conflicts and tragedies of human history. The significance of the cross, through whatever theological scheme it is approached, must be that God suffers with or for man. The devotional literature of the Christian tradition testifies to the meaningfulness of the concept of a suffering God. A God of any other kind could only be forever remote, indifferent and irrelevant to human concerns.

Tillich's response is with the Fathers: No! To attribute suffering to God is to limit him. God would then be dependent on the exigencies of human history. He would therefore be less than God, less than eternal, no longer the Same, yesterday, today and forever. This would rob conviction of its substance, devotion of its trust, theology of its rational structure. Williams responds, so be it. It is time to acknowledge with courage the limitations of God, the finitude of the divine. On what reasonable scale of values can it be judged a "higher" view of God that he is utterly impassive before the trials and miseries of man?

The solution founded on the axiological principles is that God is affected in terms of meaning but not in terms of being. The God-manhood unity in Jesus the Christ does participate in existential estrangement both in terms of the being and the meaning of that being in existence. That is to say, Jesus suffers and dies. But at every point the destructive structures of being under the conditions of existence are conquered by the creative structures of meaning in the New Being. Jesus suffers and dies in the conditions of being in existence and its consequences in meaning, and conquers by the impact of new meaning and its consequences for being in existence. It is the New Meaning that makes the New Being new.

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[8] D.D. Williams, Review of ST III in Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966, p. 218

God, present in Jesus as the Christ, suffers as well, but does not die. His suffering is in terms of meaning, not being. He is affected by the meaning of the ambiguities, tragedies and conflicts of human existence. He participates in them; he shares them. In Jesus the Christ they are brought into unity with His meaning. We can therefore speak of the suffering of God in this meaningful sense. It is not that his being is diminished or his meaning enlarged. To enlarge the divine omniscience would be impossible. But the meaning of God is actualized in human existence.

To be sure, all of this represents an extension of principles that Tillich does not himself undertake explicitly. But the direction is outlined in his thought implicitly, for at the conclusion of his system, he insists that life under the conditions of existence has meaning for God.

> In fully symbolic language one could say that life in the whole of creation and in a special way in human history contributes in every moment of time to the Kingdom of God and its eternal life. What happens in time and space, in the smallest particle of matter as well as in the greatest personality, is significant for the eternal life. And since eternal life is participation in the divine life, every finite happening is significant for God. (ST III, 398)

3. Existential Participation in the New Being

Divine and human participation meet in Jesus the Christ. As the bearer of the New Being, he participates in the conditions of human existence and conquers them. Through him, in turn, men may participate in that conquest, in the New Being he offers. That participation has both aspects of power and meaning, in Tillich's interpretation. In it, the dynamic possibilities of the conceptual symbol we are investigating are realized.

Tillich is explicit on both aspects of man's existential participation in the New Being. He claims that "to experience the New Being in Jesus as the Christ means to experience the power in him which has conquered existential estrangement in himself and in everyone who participates in him." (ST II, 125) That power is the power of being overcoming non-being. Through Jesus as the Christ, it becomes the re-creative factor in human experience under the conditions of existence. It breaks the bondage of the structures of existential estrangement. Equally, Tillich emphasizes the aspect of meaning. Participation in the universal Logos, the fundamental principle of meaning in the universe, "is dependent upon participation in the Logos actualized in a historical personality." (ST II, 112) Christianity replaces the Stoic model of the wise man with the model of the spiritual man, the man who lives in an empowering, embracing and involving relationship with Jesus the Christ. We can observe a three-fold character in this existential participation: it is ecstatic, communal and regenerative.

Tillich is consistent in stressing the ecstatic character of knowledge of the ultimate and the ecstatic nature of faith. When he discusses the relationship between Reason and Revelation, he speaks of the capacity and need for human reason to become ecstatic, standing outside itself, in order to receive revelation. It is fulfilled in its depth, not destroyed, in the process. Faith also has an ecstatic basis. Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned, obedient to an unconditional demand and trusting of the promise of ultimate fulfillment. It is an act of the total person, conscious and unconscious, rational and emotive. As the centered and embracing act of the person, it "transcends both the drives of the non-rational unconscious and the structures of the rational conscious. It transcends them, but it does not destroy them." (DF,6) Faith is ecstatic, for one stands outside himself without ceasing to be himself in the event of being grasped by the power of an ultimate concern. Participation in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ can be expected to be ecstatic as well.

Actually, Tillich does not speak of "ecstatic participation" until the third volume of his Systematics. There he refers to the Pauline "in Christ" formula as suggesting not a psychological empathy but "an ecstatic participation in the Christ who 'is the Spirit', whereby one lives in the sphere of this Spiritual power." (ST III, 117) He maintains, further, that the way for this understanding was prepared by the pattern of "ecstatic participation in the god's destiny" fostered in the mystery religions. (ST III, 142) The inner logic of his presentation of the reality of Christ anticipates the ecstatic direction.

The newness of the New Being lies in its nature as "the undistorted manifestation of essential being within and under the conditions of existence." (ST II, 119) The New Being is man's essential being in a new modality, in actuality rather than potentiality, in conquest rather than pre-existence. In participation in that New Being, a man stands outside himself, he stands related to the unity of God-manhood in which his personal center is no longer turned away from God in one or another manner of estrangement, but is united in the New Being. Ecstatic participation involves being drawn out of oneself into the inclusive, dynamic communion with God in the New Being.

This new locus of the personal center of the individual indicates the communal character of participation in the New Being. The power in which the person participates is in Jesus the Christ and "everyone who participates in him." The New Being, which represents the conquest of the "old eon" is to be found "in those who participate in him (that is, Jesus the Christ) and in the church in so far as it is based on him as its foundation." (ST II, 164) As symbols have no power apart from the groups which find in them their self-expression, so participation in the New Being is participation in its communal manifestation in the Spiritual Community. Tillich is very careful to avoid distortions in this doctrine by refusing to identify the Spiritual Community fully with any of its historical manifestations and by insisting that the church is only properly related to the Spiritual Community where Jesus the Christ is its Lord and Judge. But at the same time he insists on the positive value of the church in a remarkable way. Not only is it impossible to leap over twenty centuries of Christian tradition to an unqualified participation in the New Being in the Christ, but it would be of doubtful value if we could thus become contemporaries of Jesus. John Knox believes that "the Church remembers both more and less than the Gospels contain." He agrees that most of the factual knowledge of Jesus is contained in these sources but he claims that the church "remembers more inasmuch as its image of Jesus himself, especially in his relation to his disciples, is not fully provided by the Gospels and could not be derived from them."[9] The fact is that we know more about the meaning and reality of Jesus as the Christ in the context of the twenty centuries of Christian participation than we would without them. Tillich concurs:

> With Adolph Schlatter we can say that we know nobody as well as Jesus. In contrast to all other persons, the participation in him takes place not in the realm of contingent human individuality (which can never be approached completely by any other individual) but in the realm of his own participation in God, a participation which, in spite of the mystery of every person's relation to God, has a universality in which everyone can participate. Of course, in terms of historical documentation we do know many people better than Jesus. But in terms of personal participation in his being, we do not know anyone better because his being is the New Being which is universally valid for every human being. (ST II, 116)

It is apparent that the communal character of participation in the New Being in Jesus as the Christ draws one not only into communion with God through him but into communion with others, and moreover, that this communion, experienced in the church, is an anticipation of an as-yet-unfulfilled communion with all men. The communal character of participation points in the direction of universality. The meaning made manifest in the New Being is the meaning toward which all men are summoned. An individual's participation in that meaning is somehow unfulfilled until all men become participants as well.

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[9] John Knox, The Church and the Reality of Christ, New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1962, p. 50

Universalism is as consistent a theme in Tillich's system as is the particularism of his emphasis on Jesus the Christ as the final revelation, the bearer of the New Being. The New Being in him is New Being for all men. Salvation is healing and men are not healed in a vacuum; they are not ultimately healed until healing comes to all. "In some degree all men participate in the healing power of the New Being." Unless this were so, "they would have no being." (ST II, 167) But men are not totally healed until all are. In Jesus the Christ the healing quality is complete and unlimited, though in actuality it is not yet fulfilled.

The challenge of the universalist direction of participation gives the church its task. In religions of the non-historical type, according to Tillich, a group, whether a family or mankind, does not participate in the effects of the New Being. (ST II, 87) Representative is the legend of Gautama making his silent farewell to his family in the night as he sets off on the journey that results in his becoming the Buddha. Though Buddhism is a world religion with universal aims and vast cultural creativity, its central emphasis is always on individual spiritual attainment. In Christianity, group-life, families, historical entities are a part not of the periphery but of the inner core of the salvation process. For that matter, not only are all human beings included in the dynamics of this participation, but the natural world, through its participative continuity with man, is included as well. (ST II, 96)

Implicit in this entire discussion is the regenerative character of participation in the New Being in Jesus the Christ. The new meaning he bears provides new power-to-be. The essential being from which man has fallen is re-created in men in this participation. Men are empowered by it and can fulfill the potentials that are thwarted by the self-destructive structures of estrangement. He who participates in the Christ is a new creature, as Tillich interprets Paul. (ST II, 119) In that participation, estrangement is conquered in principle, involving the conquest over the law of sin and death, the consequences of estrangement. To be sure, participation in the New Being does not provide an escape from the conditions of existence. But the bonds of existence are broken and a man may anticipate the fulfillment that is to come at the end of time.

Symbolically, speaking, Tillich maintains that those who participate in the New Being actualized in Jesus as the Son of God receive the power of becoming children of God themselves. (ST II, 110) Theologically speaking, the participant is drawn into the experience of regeneration.

Although Tillich describes regeneration and justification as one in terms of being a divine act, he speaks of the precedence of regeneration to avoid the distortion in some Protestant circles of conceiving of justification by a faith, misconstrued as a work by which regeneration is made possible. In Tillich's view, the individual "enters" the new eon which the Christ has brought, "and in so doing he himself participates in it and is reborn through participation." (ST II, 177) The objective reality precedes the subjective involvement. Regeneration is the state of having been drawn into that new reality, the new meaning and being in the Christ. The subjective consequences are fragmentary and ambiguous but they are anticipations of the fullness to be realized eschatologically.

However fragmentary and ambiguous, regenerative participation does have ethical results. George Tavard believes this to be the real significance of Tillich's Christology, that it bears on man's ethical potentialities. He writes that Tillich's "...is not an ethics of good works, or of the imitation of Christ, or of sacramental sanctification. It is an ethics of ontological participation."[10] In the full range of Tillich's ethical writings, being takes precedence over doing. That is not to say, of course, that the doing of ethical acts is devalued. The principle is simply that what man does is rooted in what he is; that what a man does cannot fundamentally change the character of who he is, rather fundamental changes in his being determine the actual changes in his doing.

Participating in the New Being, a man is a new creature and hence capable of actions with new significance and quality. He does not act in conformity with some new legalistic scheme or in the style of asceticism in an imitative way. Rather, "being Christlike means participating fully in the New Being present in him." (ST II, 122) The ethical consequences of that participation are not the denial of the actualities of human existence but the living within them concretely in such a way as to enable one's actions to make the New Being translucent. The participant in the New Being lives out of the new meaning and power manifest in the Christ.

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[10] G. H. Tavard, op. cit., p. 162

Ultimately, the regenerative consequence of participation is eternal life. Tillich distinguishes the Christian doctrine from the immortality concept which he suspects may not even be Platonic. The symbol of the eating of the tree of life is a suggestive one, meaning that it is participation in the eternal that makes man eternal. (ST II, 67)

Does the regenerative character of participation in the New Being put Tillich in the tradition that requires a decisive, subjective "religious experience" that is regenerative? Tillich takes note of this "point of contention" between Orthodoxy and Pietism which continues into the present and answers that what is necessary for Christian salvation is "existential participation and ultimate seriousness in dealing with theological questions." (Pers,16-7)

Within our analysis of the divine participation in the conditions of existence and existential participation in the New Being are all the basic principles of Tillich's doctrine of atonement. This is because, in his view, it is an error to try to separate the "nature" of Christ from the "work" of Christ. They are intimately bound together - with the principles of the one implicit in the other.

Tillich is dissatisfied with both the objective doctrine of Anselm and the subjective one of Abelard which continue to appear in different refractions in the history of doctrine. The subjective doctrine tends to make the cross secondary and human experience decisive while the objective view of substitutionary atonement subordinates the love of God to his justice and breaks the divine work by insisting on the cross as the contribution of the human Jesus to the maintenance of the divine justice. Tillich believes that replacing the concept of substitution with that of participation is the way to a more adequate doctrine that can balance both subjective and objective aspects. (ST II, 173)

The principles Tillich elaborates reflect the participation structure we have been observing. First, the atoning processes are created by God and by Him alone. Second, there are no conflicts between God's reconciling love and retributive justice, but the self-destructive consequences of estrangement are ordained to go their way, in God's justice, because they are a part of the structure of being. Third, in removing guilt and punishment, God does not overlook the depth of that existential estrangement.

The fourth principle is that God's atoning activity is his participation in existential estrangement and its consequences. He does not remove those consequences but

> ...he can take them upon himself by participating in them and transforming them for those who participate in his participation. Here we are in the very heart of the doctrine of atonement and of God's acting with man and his world. (ST II, 174)

Using the axiological principle of meaning to interpret this passage, we understand that God shares in the meaning of those structures for persons in existence, and in the sharing, taking them into unity with himself, breaks their power and transforms them. This divine participation is manifest, according to Tillich's fifth principle, in the Cross of the Christ.

The sixth principle is that "through participation in the New Being... men also participate in the manifestation of the atoning act of God." (ST II, 176) Men participate in the suffering of God, in his sharing the meaning of the meaninglessness that is man's condition in estrangement; they participate in the suffering of the Christ. God's suffering is, then, not a substitution, but a free participation, fully consonant with his nature as God, as we have seen.[11] Man's understanding of it is not by "having a theoretical knowledge of the divine participation,but (by) participation in the divine participation, accepting it and being transformed by it." Participating in the divine participation, man participates in the power of the New Being.

4. Biblical Backgrounds of Tillich's Christological Participation

Tillich's critics and interpreters are hardly to be blamed for taking him at his word when he asserts that the material norm of systematic theology today must be the New Being in Jesus as the Christ as our ultimate concern. (ST I, 50) But their procedure is to be questioned when they immediately conclude that Tillich's thought is ontologically determined, with the biblical witness to Jesus Christ submerged by an alien structure and terminology. The judgment is supported by citing the lack of biblical quotation in his exposition of his Christology in Systematic Theology II.

Nothing less than another dissertation would be adequate to the task of documenting the manner in which the Christologies of the New Testament and the exposition of Tillich illuminate each other. However, at this point in our investigation a survey of the question must be presented for two reasons. First, we have traced the development of the participation concept philosophically, describing its character as an ontological concept. This in itself does not justify its theological employment, though, to be sure, it does not prohibit it. But the term, in Tillich's Christology and to a degree in his symbol and cognition theories, appears to have a religious significance. For the sake of a balanced portrayal of the concept's history, we should look at its background in the "religious" side of the Christian tradition, particularly in the New Testament. And second, since the "norm" of participation is, for Tillich, to be found in the Christological setting, biblical anticipations of his understanding would seem to be extremely important. As a matter of fact, we shall see that the biblical rather than the ontological influences on Tillich's Christology as well as on his participation theory are decisive. David H. Kelsey maintains that Tillich's theological norm in actuality is Jesus as the Christ, not the New Being, "quasi-ontological term" that it is; or more precisely, his norm is the picture of Jesus as the Christ.[12] Tillich defines the Bible as a source of theology (ST I, 34-6) and suggests that though he has not included many specific biblical references in his Systematics, the knowledgeable will discern them in the background. (ST I, vii)

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[11] pp.220-2 above.

The biblical source from which the major elements of Tillich's Christology can be seen as derived is Paul's doctrine of the Second Adam. "...As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (I Cor. 15:22) As Adam is the symbol for the transition from essence to existence with its subsequent structures of existential estrangement, so the Christ is the bearer of new reality, the inaugurator of the new eon. Paul states his conviction that "as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (Rom. 5:18) The elements of the two transitions, the atoning work of Christ, his universal significance and men's solidarity with him are all contained in the Pauline statement.

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[12] D.H. Kelsey, op. cit., p. 6

David Hill affirms his agreement with Matthew Black, W.D. Davies and others that Paul's doctrine of the Second Adam is much more fundamental than has been generally realized. It does, in fact, provide the "scaffolding" of his Christology.[13] Hill believes that this concept is the Pauline form of the Son of Man symbol in the Synoptics. W.D. Davies, however, questions the ease with which he comes to this conclusion.[14] Whatever the merits of these positions, it is at least clear that the basic structure of Tillich's doctrine has affinities with an important strain of biblical thought.

More than similarity of structure, however, can be asserted. Hill sees three further important parallels. First, the personal and social aspects of participation in the New Being are clearly points of contact with Paul's formula of "being in Christ", which we must elaborate further. Second, Tillich's treatment of the temptation of Christ is very similar to the Pauline doctrine. In a passage that reflects the Second Adam theme, Paul speaks of the temptation to be like God, before which Adam fell, as met and conquered by Jesus Christ. (Phil.2:6f) Jesus resisted the temptation to separate his own center from God, to become a center in himself in estrangement. He kept his will subject to God's will. The third point of similarity which Hill sees is the meaning of Christlikeness. In the same passage, Paul challenges Christians to take on themselves "the form of Christ," not in a legalistic, imitative way, but to "have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The inner quality of Tillich's ethics, we have seen, is the aim to make the power of the New Being translucent. Those who have this mind, for Paul, are transformed (Rom. 12:2) becoming new men. (cf. ST I, 95-6)

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[13] D. Hill, "Paul's 'Second Adam' and Tillich's Christology" in Union Seminary Quarterly Review, v.21, 1965, p. 16

[14] Sigmund Mowinckel has expounded the theory in He That Cometh, trans. G.W. Anderson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1956. Davies simply questions the "easy negotiation" of the way from Paul to the Gospels by Hill, without direct refutation. Union Seminary Quarterly Review, op. cit. p.33

Tom F. Driver raises an interesting question about this argument. Why does Tillich not simply use the "Second Adam" phrase and be done with it? He proceeds to formulate an equally interesting answer: that the Second Adam language "has today the liability that it may pull the Christ of faith into that region of un-historical myth where Adam has long since gone."[15] For Tillich, it is necessary to assert forcefully the historical character of Jesus as the Christ. The transition of Adam, from essence to existence, is transcendent; the turning-point of Jesus the Christ must be in the midst of historical actuality. Hence Tillich needs to create new terms.

Nevertheless, the New Testament realities can be seen behind them. It is particularly instructive to examine more closely the parallels between Tillich's participation in the New Being and Paul's "being in Christ." We need not accept all the elaborations that have been developed around H. Wheeler Robinson's seminal theory on the "Hebrew conception of corporate personality" to acknowledge in the religious experience of Judaism a background for the Pauline understanding. The Hebraic capacity to speak of

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[15] Tom Driver, Discussion in ibid., p. 30

Israel in personal terms, the fluidity of transition from singular to plural terms, and other indications of individual identification with the corporate people are sources for the kind of relational experience Paul describes.[16] Nor need we identify primitive Christianity as a mystery religion to recognize the likeness of Paul's expressions with the Greek mystery idea of the god as the demon of the group, its soul and life. In communion with the god, the members of the group become entheoi, enthused with his inner presence, or rise above the prison of their individual natures to lose themselves in the common life of the whole and become divine. F.M. Cornford describes the dynamics:

> In this type of religion...the central fact is the human group, with a homogeneous, inorganic type of solidarity, held together by the unique relation in which it stands to its daemon - a relation by which man can participate in the divine and, conversely, the divine can enter into man.[17]

The Pauline concept did not take shape in a vacuum; behind it were strands of basic human religious experience which themselves had a long tradition.

In the Pauline view, the historical, ethical and eschatological orientations of the Hebraic tradition reshaped the elements of the mystery experience, as well as Stoic insights, centering on a person, Jesus Christ, and the power of his Spirit. In his elaboration of the relationship "in

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[16] H.W. Robinson's article is in Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments, P. Volz (ed.), Stummer and Hempel. The theory has been revived by J. de Frain in Adam et son lignage: études sur la notion de 'personnalité corporatif' dans la Bible, Bruges: Desclee de Brouwer, 1959. De Fraine sees "corporate personality" as expressing two things: "d'abord le fait qu'un individu identifié à une communauté; et ensuite que, nonobstant ce caractère 'corporatif,' il demeure vraiment une personne individuelle."p.18

[17] F.M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy, New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957, pp. 113-4

Christ," the ecstatic, communal and regenerative character of participation in the Tillichian scheme can be seen to be paralleled. The relation of the believer to Christ is so close as to make them inseparable. Partaking or partnership in Christ is exclusive: "you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." (I Cor. 10:21) Metechein, which Paul uses, is a cognate of methexis. In this relationship, the believer shares in the benefits of Christ. Paul addresses the Philippians as "partakers with me of grace" (1:7) It is God who calls believers into "the fellowship of his Son" (I Cor. 1:9) which is a "participation (koinonia) in the Holy Spirit" (II Cor. 13:14) and a sharing in his power.

The believer is called out of himself, in Paul's letters, into a relationship that has a consistently ecstatic character. Interpreters are increasingly disturbed over attributing mysticism to Paul. Anders Nygren summons us to shed our individualist presuppositions that insist on a distinction between Christ and his disciples. "No, Christ is the whole, and the disciples participate in him."[18] He insists that this is not mystical but a sharing in an objective historical reality. Bultmann explains that the "in Christ" formula "denotes not, to be sure, an individual mystical relationship to Christ, but the fact that the individual actual life of the believer, living not out of himself but out of the divine deed of salvation, is determined by Christ."[19] The danger of the mystical reading of Paul which all want to avoid is the loss of selfhood in the supra-historical, spiritual "substance" that mysticism implies. In Christ the individual remains a self; it is still he who rejoices, loves, believes, acts. But he is no longer lost in the self-destructive patterns of his selfhood. He stands outside himself; his center is united with Christ. It is a matter of ecstatic participation. (cf. ST II, 119, III, 117)

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[18] A. Nygren, Christ and His Church, London:SPCK, 1957, p.92, his underscoring

[19] R. Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament, v.I, New York: Scribner's, 1951, p. 328

One who is in Christ shares the wonders of that ecstasy. He is "a new creation." (II Cor. 5:17) He finds encouragement in Christ (Phil. 2:1) becomes "alive to God" (Rom. 6:11) and receives the gifts of eternal life (Rom. 6:23), freedom (Gal. 2:4) and redemption. (Rom. 3:24) The believer "puts on" Christ (Gal. 3:27) and finds "it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." (Gal. 2:20)

The communal character of the relationship "in Christ" is equally clear in Paul's letters. Not only do believers stand in a special relationship with him but in the experience of profoundly sharing with each other. Stählin defines the koinonia which expresses this relationship as carrying the sense of

> a large number of people who either have a share in or accept a part in something which is both greater and more comprehensive than themselves, and through sharing in which they stand in close communion with one another.[20]

Paul writes to the Philippians of their relationship in Christ in terms of what they have in common, for they "know him and the power of his resurrection and share his sufferings." (Phil. 3:10) The unity of believers is attested and sealed in the Eucharist: "because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body." The cup is "a participation (koinonia) in the blood of Christ" and the bread "a participation" in his body. (I Cor.10:16-7)

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[20] W. Stählin, in Studia Liturgica, v.1, 1962, p. 220

The Pauline concept of the church as the body of Christ is the most obvious expression of this unity. J.A.T. Robinson's discussion of the meaning of sarx and soma in Paul is illuminating. In II Corinthians (5:5), body is "that which joins all people, irrespective of individual differences, in life's bundle together."[21] This is true of both terms. The difference is that "while sarx stands for man, in the solidarity of creation, in his distance from God, soma stands for man, in the solidarity of creation, as made for God."[22] Christ has participated in our sarx, to break the hold of the powers that have dominion over it, through his death "dying out on them," to make possible a soma for us. Believers in turn participate in his death and triumph and are to reproduce, through baptism and in conduct, what Christ has done on the cross. Paul expresses it precisely: "...you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God." (Rom. 7:4) In Robinson's view, Paul's doctrine of the church is an extension of his Christology in virtue of the connection between the flesh-body and the glorified-body of Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "your bodies are members of Christ." (I Cor. 6:15) His concept is corporal, not corporate. The flesh of the incarnate Jesus or the bread of the Eucharist or the church are not said to be like the Body of Christ - they are the Body of Christ. To Robinson, this is not a metaphor but Christians "are in literal fact the risen organism of Christ's person in all its concrete reality."[23]

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[21] J.A.T. Robinson, The Body, London: SCM Press, 1952, p. 29
[22] Ibid., p. 31
[23] Ibid., p. 51

His translation of I Corinthians 12:27 carries this through: "ye are the body of Christ and severally membranes thereof." John Knox agrees that "more is involved here than mere comparison...the Church is in fact the body of Christ."[24] Robinson continues with his analysis of the significance of the Supper and the words spoken by Jesus, "This is my flesh", basing his reading on Jeremias' view that the word was the Aramaic bisra. What this means is

> that Jesus is making over to his followers "till He come" His actual self, His life and personality. In so far then as the Christian community feeds on this body and blood, it becomes the very life and personality of the risen Christ.[25]

Robinson carries this interpretative principle of identity through in commenting on the body-member simile: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." (I Cor. 12:12) He believes that Paul solves the problem of the One and the Many not by a union of the different members among themselves but by maintaining that there must be many members for a body to exist at all. He sees this as a reversal of the Old Testament concept of the remnant, where a few or even one could represent the many; here the many represent the one - in fact, they constitute the one.

Robinson's interpretation is a valuable corrective to the metaphorical understanding of the "in Christ" formula and "body of Christ" concept in Paul. The communal character of these terms receives full expression. However, the element of separation that is discernible in Paul's view is lost in the emphasis on the identity of believer and Christ. In the captivity epistles the language is shifted: Christ is the "head of the body, the church," (Col. 1:18) and the reconciliation of all things in Christ is affirmed in spite of the fact that the Colossians are still torn by devotion to the "elemental spirits of the universe." The headship of Christ refers to his overlordship over the powers, a conquest which the Colossian Christians have obviously not realized in their own lives. His headship over the church is the source of its life, glory, love and peace (Col. 3:4) into which all are to grow. (Eph. 4:15-6) A dialectical element underlies these passages. While there is an identity between Christ and the church, it is also true that the church has not realized in its life the full significance of that identity: Christ is not only within it but above it. To say that the church is the body of Christ is surely not to utter "only a metaphor" and yet it is not a description. The church is clearly no mere organization of men to be comprehended by the sociological sciences. Schmidt has grasped an important factor in Paul: "along with the so-called Christ-mysticism and Christ-cult there remain the God of the Old Testament and his worshipping community."[26] Christ is still kurios and the Christians are douloi. John Knox summarizes Paul's ecclesiology in this way:

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[24] John Knox, op. cit., p. 83

[25] J.A.T. Robinson, op. cit., p. 57

> The Church, therefore, is not only the "body" of the Event, or the "body" of God's action, but in a real and wholly unique sense it is Christ's own body and has its reconciling, uniting character because he himself lives in its life.[27]

Yet its life is not entirely coterminal with his life. Everything the church does is not Christ's unilateral doing. The formula that expresses the relationship precisely is participation. To say that Christians in the church participate in Christ preserves the ecstatic and communal character of Paul's doctrine, emphasizing the priority of Christ in his Lordship over the new eon and the church, imparting both connotations of identity without loss of personal center, and distinction without undermining the presence of his power and spirit. The participation concept is also inclusive enough to illumine the meaning of Paul's other symbols for the church, that it is "God's temple" (I Cor. 3:16-7) or the bride of Christ. (Eph. 5:31-2)

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[26] K.L. Schmidt, The Church, trans. from TWNT, London: Black, 1950, p.22

[27] John Knox, op. cit., p. 105

We have already seen many indications of the regenerative character of the relationship of the believer "in Christ." Paul is vivid and direct in describing to the faithful what they have experienced, are and will be experiencing. They had been in bondage but in Christ are set free. (Gal. 5:1f) They had struggled under the yoke of the law but are now released to life in the spirit. They had been dead, but now are alive to God. They have "died with Christ," are "united with him in a death like his," a death to the old self (Rom. 6:4-8) but now are risen to a life that is new. Believers "were...raised with him" (Col. 2:12) and "we shall...live with him." (Rom. 6:8) In Christ, the believer has become nothing less than a new creation. Cerfaux describes Paul's view of what has happened:

> It is not merely a new social status to replace the old, but it is a new human nature which is created in the Christian which is a participation in the nature of Christ: a new race of men begins, a phenomenon which can be compared only with the first creation.[28]

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[28] Lucien Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, trans. G. Webb and A. Walker, New York: Herder, 1959, p. 171

The three-fold character of participation - ecstatic, communal and regenerative - is all visible in the Pauline formulation.

The letters of Paul are not, however, the only New Testament background of Tillich's Christology and his understanding of the dynamics of participation. The kingdom-teachings of Jesus as reported in the Synoptics contain the dimensions of future realization and present actuality. While the prayer of Jesus is for the kingdom to come and the direction he gives his disciples is to watch for its coming, with the appearance of the Son of Man in glory, there is also ample evidence of the new eon having already arrived, that the kingdom is "at hand" (Mk. 1:16) and "in your midst." (Lk. 17:21) The Isaianic prophecy is fulfilled in the hearing of those gathered in the synagogue at Capernaum and when John the Baptist sends his disciples to ask if Jesus is the one who is to come, the answer is to report on the signs of what is already happening. (Lk. 7:22) The frequent references to "entering the kingdom" (Matt. 5:27, 7:21, 18:3, etc.) emphasize its actuality and its dimension of inclusiveness. The banquet sayings imply community, as do the parables of the tares and the dragnet. Lundström cannot be far from the mark when he stresses both aspects:

> To Jesus the present and the coming Kingdom of God stood side by side. Neither can be explained away or assume a dominating position at the expense of the other. What unites them is the Son of Man...The Kingdom of God has come and is active in the sayings and miracles of Jesus. Satan is overcome...Only faith sees what is afoot, but at the Last Day the power and glory of the Kingdom shall be revealed to all.[29]

But that power and glory shall not be other than that which is already known in Jesus and shared in an anticipatory way by those who are ready. Men may participate now in that New Reality which will bring the future fulfillment.

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[29] Gösta Lundström, The Kingdom of God in the Teaching of Jesus, trans. J. Bulman, London: Oliver and Boyd, p. 238

Basic themes of the Johannine literature must also be seen in the background of the formulations of Tillich. The prayer of John 17, in which Jesus seeks the drawing of the faithful into the unity that he shares with the Father has the character of ecstatic participation. The conversation with Nicodemus is on the regeneration that is offered in the Spirit. (John 3:5f) Perhaps the climactic passage for the meaning of *koinonia* and its communal character is the opening of I John, where the author declares his intention in writing, "that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." (I Jn. 1:3) The symbol of the vine and the branches is a participation symbol: "for apart from me you can do nothing." (Jn. 15:5) (cf. ST I, 134, II, 126)

To these New Testament backgrounds we might add one more: Hebrews 3. Here the author writes encouragement to the faithful, that "we share (*metecho*) in Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end." (Heb. 3:14) The meaning here is very close to the Pauline concept of the body of Christ. The symbol, however, is that of a house, God's house, with a universal dimension in that God is the builder of all things. (3:4) Within this house Moses had been faithful but his role is hardly that of Jesus, who as the Son is so close to the builder, and who was faithful "over" God's house: "and we are his house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope." (3:6) The faithful have their role in actualizing this house because, participating in Christ, they share in the power and promise of his lordship.

The New Testament does not only provide sources for Tillich's general Christological structure and his specific understanding of existential participation in the New Being in Jesus the Christ; we can, of course, find ample background there for Tillich's doctrine of divine participation in the human condition as well. The Logos doctrine of John 1 is too obvious to require elaboration: it is clearly decisive for Tillich. The kenotic Christology of Philippians 2 is likewise determinative. The passage that may easily be overlooked, however, includes the opening chapters of Hebrews. (cf. ST II, 111-2, 119, 158)

What is significant is that a dynamic is explicit in this passage, verbalized in terms of participation, which has no parallel in the Platonic dialogues or the Neo-Platonic philosophic tradition. Here we read of the exalted Jesus, the Son through whom all things were created (1:2) and in whom all things exist. (2:10) But since the children of men "share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death." (2:14) The movement of participation in the philosophic tradition, as we have seen, is always from "below" to "above," from the lesser to the greater reality, from the world of appearances to the world of Ideas. Here the concept is used in the reverse direction, as Tillich uses it. That reverse direction becomes normative for Christian participation. The author here is expressing in terms of partaking, the dynamic that is basic to the New Testament understanding of the Christian calling, to share in Christ's suffering, that we may be glorified with him, to participate in his participation.

Were theologians to be judged on their fidelity to the Bible according to the number of biblical quotations they include in their writings, Tillich would obviously, apart from his sermons, be found wanting. Such a course, however, is obviously superficial. On the deeper issues of the themes, concepts, symbols and doctrines of the Bible, especially of the prophetic tradition and the New Testament, Tillich is surely not an "unbiblical theologian." But these would not be sources for Tillich were it not for something else the New Testament contains: the picture of Jesus the Christ and the potentiality of our participating in it.

5. Participation in the Picture of Christ and its Relevance for the "Historical Jesus"

The fundamental affirmation of Tillich's theology, or for that matter of any Christian theology in his view, is that Jesus is the Christ. The picture of the character of Jesus is an essential aspect of that affirmation. Tillich draws on that picture as portrayed in the New Testament for his Christology and, in fact, for the basic nature of the answering side of his theological system. In Jesus, essential God-manhood is actualized under the conditions of human existence, with no signs of estrangement in his life, neither the removal in unbelief of his center from God, nor concupiscence, nor hubris, for he saw goodness as not one's own possession but a participation in the goodness of God. (ST II, 126-7) Hence, Lessing's crucial question demands an answer: how can an eternal blessedness be based on an historical event?

As an historical figure, Jesus must be a proper subject of historical research. The church can have no warrant for staking off his life to remove it from historical investigation. Tillich affirms the capacity of Protestant Christianity to apply with honesty the critical methods of historical research to its own sacred documents. But this research places a special urgency behind Lessing's question. Suppose historical research should conclude that the biblical assertions about the life of Jesus are unfounded? In an autobiographical reflection, Tillich refers to his raising and attempting to answer this question in 1911 in its radical form: "how the Christian doctrine might be understood if the non-existence of the historical Jesus **should** become historically probable." (IH, 33-4) Norman Pittenger has presented Tillich's answer in this way:

> ...he is prepared to say that, if it were necessary to reduce our precise knowledge of Jesus as an historical character to a minimum, there would still be the basic and enduring reality - namely, that in and through such events as did in fact occur in and in association with, Jesus, there was manifested the new being."[30]

However, Tillich insists that we must go beyond the possibility of reduction to a minimum, in spite of the improbability of that kind of conclusion. Suppose it were probable that Jesus never lived - what then, for Christian life and thought?

The key to Tillich's answer is contained in a few sentences:

> participation, not historical argument, guarantees the reality of the event upon which Christianity is based. It guarantees a personal life in which the New Being has con-

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[30] W.N. Pittenger, "Paul Tillich as a Theologian" in Anglican Theological Review, v. 43, 1961, p. 278

> quered the old being. But it does not guarantee his name to be Jesus of Nazareth. Historical doubt concerning the existence and the life of someone with this name cannot be overruled. He might have had another name. (This is a historically absurd, but logically necessary, consequence of the historical method.) Whatever his name, the New Being was and is actual in this man. (ST II, 114)

This answer, however, is either unclear or unconvincing, for Tillich's solution to the problem of the "historical Jesus" has been under attack consistently with many of the same arguments mustered against it regardless of Tillich's subsequent replies. Since the key concept, however, is participation, we can expect that our present analysis should help to clarify Tillich's position and, perhaps, to make it more convincing.

Part of Tillich's heritage on this issue, which all of us share, is the failure of the old "quest for the historical Jesus." It became apparent, after the attempts that characterized the nineteenth century, that is was impossible to distill from the records a portrait of Jesus as he really was, before the "distortions" of the tradition that grew around his memory. It became clear that any description of Jesus was conditioned by the hermeneutical principles one brought to the task. In fact, it has come to be questioned whether an historical positivism can uncover a Jesus who would have any significance. Tillich brings to the problem the distinctions made by his teacher, Martin Kähler, which are rooted in the two words for "history" in the German language: Historie and Geschichte. The former represents history simply as recorded events, the latter, as interpreted, known, significant for individuals and groups. We have seen that Tillich is convinced that history is not really understood by the historian unless he participates in it, unless it becomes no longer simply Historie but

Geschichte. Kähler's distinction is between "der sogenannte historische Jesus" who is a subject of historical uncertainty, and "der geschichtliche, biblische Christus" who is the object of faith.[31] With these same distinctions, Bultmann has come to insist on no more than the historicity of Jesus, his pure "thatness," refusing to concede any specific characteristics as indispensable. Tillich appears to go somewhat further, though he insists that the picture of Jesus which we have must be understood as derived from the faith experience of the church, from existential participation in the power of New Being in Jesus. Jesus was not just historically there, but was there in such a way as to be the bearer of that New Being. This takes Tillich almost as far as John Knox, for one, wants assertions about Jesus to go. "We cannot relegate Jesus to the background of the Christ Event", according to Knox. "It belongs to our existence as Christians to affirm the actuality of Jesus' existence - and not merely the bare fact of it, but something of the full, distinctive quality of it."[32] But at this point Tillich sees a danger, claiming that faith cannot guarantee "the essentials in the biblical picture." We must assert that "faith can only guarantee its own foundation." (ST II, 114)

Tillich's position and the criticisms of it involve two basic issues. The first is the relation of the facts of history to the realities of history. James C. Livingston argues, following Hans Conzelmann, that although the Gospels do not intend to be historical sources they can still be used as such by the historian. Therefore, Tillich's insistence that we cannot go behind "the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ" arbitrarily prohibits a valid historical endeavor.[33] Tillich's point, however, is not that such an endeavor is unwarranted but that it is not significant. The discovery of verifiable historical facts will not enlarge the meaning of historical realities. Let historical research uncover the fact that Jesus was one of seventy-three or one-hundred and seventy-three victims crucified in A.D. 27. Such a fact in itself does not grasp one except as it has a place within a larger picture of meaning.

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[31] Kähler's work is translated by Carl Braaten as The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964, with a foreward by Tillich.

[32] John Knox, op. cit., p. 21

Similarly, Livingston argues that because historical truths are only probable they cannot, for Tillich, be the foundation of faith. In this way, Tillich "has drawn an illicit deduction from a truism" according to Livingston, by holding that because historical knowledge is probable it cannot be certain.[34] The thrust of Tillich's argument, however, is elsewhere. The facts of history are not decisive for faith because in and of themselves alone, they cannot become matters of ultimate concern. Only within the framework of meaning can they carry this significance. Livingston goes on to conclude that Tillich arrives at the obviously untenable conclusion that "nothing, in effect, can really count against the object of faith" because the evidence of the facts of history do not. He is here limiting the scope of Tillich's position to fit his argument. For Tillich another faith, and only another faith, can count against faith. We have seen him contend that scientific criticism does not destroy religious symbols; they are destroyed when they no longer express the ultimate concern of the group for which they have meaning and power. John Knox writes of an image of Jesus as a constituent part of the memory of the church, which must carry with it, for those who share in it, its own authenticity. He states:

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[33] James C. Livingston, "Tillich's Christology and Historical Research" in Paul Tillich: Retrospect and Future, op. cit., p. 44

[34] Ibid., p. 45

> I am not sure I can see how historical research could conceivably destroy this memory; but I am sure that if it, or anything else, should do so, it would also destroy, or would have destroyed, the Church itself - and therefore... the picture (of Tillich) and the kerygma (of Bultmann) as well.[35]

Clearly, historical research cannot destroy this memory; only another memory, another decisive concern, could accomplish that. Equally clear is the deduction that no one element of the complex can be removed without displacing all. Only other realities of history, that is to say, other facts of history that express meaning, can dislocate the reality of "the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ."

The second issue which is fundamental to this discussion and even more crucial, is the question how it can be possible for faith to guarantee a reality of history. The basic critiques of Tillich's position here are expressed by D. Moody Smith, Jr. and Livingston. Smith outlines Tillich's assertion in this way, that participation through faith guarantees a fully adequate though not historically strictly accurate representation of the personal life attested in the New Testament in which the New Being came to unambiguous expression. Smith asks how, if no single item of the tradition is guaranteed by faith or historically certain, "could the tradition as a whole be guaranteed and affirmed as essentially and therefore historically true in the face of historical doubt?"[36] Must not the representation have some content? If no specific content is verifiable by faith, how can the total picture, composed of contents, be guaranteed? The argument holds in itself but loses its force against Tillich because it involves a misreading of Tillich's assertions. Tillich does not claim validity for "the tradition as a whole" or any content within it on the basis of faith. What he does contend is that the driving force within the tradition is guaranteed. No specific concrete event is ascertained by faith, but the fact that concrete events did occur which embodied the power that faith can and does ascertain.

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[35] John Knox, op. cit., p. 35; my insertions.

Livingston's argument is not based on a misreading. He agrees with Tillich that faith cannot guarantee "the essentials in the biblical picture" because faith cannot guarantee historical claims. How then does Tillich know that there was a concrete individual, historical being who created the biblical picture, that the picture was not created by the disciples out of their imaginations? What can Tillich mean when he asserts that "faith can guarantee only its own foundation, namely the appearance of that reality which has created faith"? He cannot mean that faith is able to guarantee the existence of the New Being as a concrete historical individual, for that is an historical question. Does he mean then that faith guarantees "the subject of believing reception" but not that this reality is Jesus of Nazareth? But Livingston quotes Tillich as having said that "Jesus as the Christ is both an historical fact and a subject of believing reception" (ST I,

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[36] D. Moody Smith, Jr. "The Historical Jesus in Paul Tillich's Christology", Journal of Religion, v. 46, 1966, p. 137

II, 98) and that these two factors cannot be separated. "Therefore," according to Livingston, "it is illicit for him to go on to say that it is existential 'participation, not historical argument (that) guarantees the reality of the event upon which Christianity is based.'" Livingston concludes:

> The event upon which Christianity is based is a union of historical fact and existential participation or faith. All that faith can guarantee is the receptive dimension of the event."[37]

The historical risk and the historical task are not eliminated.

A difficulty in Livingston's critique is rooted in the ambiguity of the term "historical" as he uses it. Tillich does not claim that faith can guarantee the historical Jesus but it does guarantee the historic Christ. The Jesus of Historie is outside its competence, but not the Christ of Geschichte. But Livingston helps to define the issue: can faith guarantee a factual, historical foundation for the historic Christ or for the "biblical picture"? It must be emphasized that Tillich is not contending for faith as a method of historical research. He is not asking us to acknowledge the capacity of faith to confirm any historical fact other than this one: a basis, in fact, of that biblical picture.

Had we not been examining participation in its various settings in Tillich's thought, we might well have agreed with Livingston that its employment here is illicit. However, having seen participation as the means of verification both in Tillich's theory of cognition and his analysis of symbols, we are not surprised to find it here, at the very heart of Tillich's system. How can participation guarantee the factual foundation of the picture? Because, Tillich holds, "it can be definitely asserted that through this picture the New Being has power to transform those who are transformed by it." (ST II, 114) But Smith, for one, answers that "...it is by no means self-evident that an imagined picture could not have transforming power."[38]

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[37] J. Livingston, op. cit., pp. 46-7

Participation does not guarantee the "elements" of the fact-event behind the biblical picture, but it does guarantee its character. The nature of existential participation guarantees the historical, personal and Spirit-bearing character of the factual basis of that picture. This can become clear in comparing participation in the Christian circle with participation in a non-historical mythology. The latter, such as is found in mystery or mystical religions, may have ecstatic, communal and regenerative character of a kind. But that kind is directed toward escape from history rather than regeneration within it, toward an emptying of the personal center, rather than a fulfilling of it, toward an ecstasy divorced from the structures of the mind and life, rather than a transformation of them. The very nature of the participation that is known in the Christian circle demands the orientation in history, the person-to-person communion, and the bearing of the Spirit that unites power and meaning, that are possible only in the "factual foundation" of the biblical picture. The participation could not be possible or explicable in any other way. Tillich has written that "it is the bearer of the Spirit who through the Spirit has created the church and the picture of himself in the New Testament in mutual dependence."[39] They are mutually corroborative. Neither can be explained without the other. Kelsey gives us this insight: "...the picture participates in the power of the New Being just as much as the receiver of the picture does."[40]

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[38] D.M. Smith, op. cit., p. 138

6. Christological Participation

In keeping with the principles by which Jesus as the Christ is to be understood, as the eternal God-manhood unity actualized under the conditions of existence, participation in the Christological setting of Tillich's system has two directions. On the one hand, God in unity with Jesus as the Christ, participates in the meaning of existence and its conditions. On the other, persons participate in the power of the New Being in its meaningfulness. Both kinds of participation have qualities that are fundamental to Tillich's use of this conceptual symbol.

God participates in the meaning, the consequences and aim of the destructive structures of estranged existence. In this sense, God suffers though his being is not made finite for he transcends existence while participating in it. This pattern of participation is paralleled by the ontological structure in which God, as the Ground of Being, is the "absolute participant."

The divine participation is actualized in a person who becomes the bearer of the New Being. In Jesus as the Christ, the incarnation of the Logos, the eternal principle of meaning, who participates in human existence, the conditions of existence are conquered. The meanings of estrangement and its structures are drawn into his unbroken unity with God. They are transformed; their power is broken; they are seen in their full negativity as not ultimate; they are defeated. The biblical backgrounds of this view are the Pauline Christology, the Johannine Logos doctrine, the Synoptic picture of Jesus as the Christ, and the participation concept in Hebrews. The biblical witness is that in this person the New Being has come. George Tavard believes that no one has raised the question with the seriousness and earnestness of Tillich, "What is the relation between an event in history, the appearance of the Christ, and universal salvation?"[41] That, of course, is Lessing's question. In keeping with the Tillichian principles, the answer is that an eternal blessedness and universal salvation must be based on an historical event.

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[39] Paul Tillich, "Rejoinder", Journal of Religion, op. cit., p. 194
[40] D.H. Kelsey, op. cit., p. 48

The answering participation on the human side is in the power of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ, a participation in his participation which has transforming effectiveness. The man of faith is no longer bound by the self-destructive structures of estranged existence but can participate in unambiguous life. He can anticipate, in this participation, the ultimate fulfillment that is to come. The participation has ecstatic, communal and regenerative character, with historical and personal dimensions. Eugene H. Peters asks if the transformation that results from the conquest of estrangement by the New Being is "to be conceived as release from existence?" He questions, "How can one who is estranged from God be in union with him?" He wonders if it must not be Tillich's position, in the light of his principles, that salvation is from existence if existence is estrangement.[42] The questions are superficial. It would not be transformation but escape if salvation did not occur within existence. Salvation for Tillich is not from existence but from estrangement and its consequences. The dimension of historical actuality is central as the setting of the saving process. Nevertheless, once salvation from estrangement occurs, existence is transcended. That is not to say it is negated. Rather it is transformed and no longer simply what it had been, even though its anticipatory realization of unambiguous life is not fulfilled. Salvation within history points beyond history. Participation for Tillich is transforming: ecstatic, communal, regenerative, in historical and personal dimensions.

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[41] G. Tavard, op. cit., p. 169

Behind all of these Christological and soteriological assertions of Tillich stands "the biblical picture of Jesus as the Christ." Daniel Day Williams insists that there is nothing "gnostic" or "docetic" about Tillich's Christology, as early critics had held. Tillich, he maintains, "does not dissolve the meaning of Christ into a general, abstract idea."[43] Jesus as the Christ is an historical individual, bearing the power of New Being, attested by the nature of our participation in that power and its meaning. And yet there is a question to be raised here, which is pressed by Wolfhart Pannenberg. He contends that the historically unique person of Jesus is not "constitutive" for Tillich's concept of God. In support of his assertion he bids us look at Tillich's discussion of the trinity.[44]

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[42] E.H. Peters, op. cit., p. 301
[43] D. D. Williams, op. cit., p. 217
[44] W. Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 231

To be sure, Tillich's discussion of the trinity does not begin with the historical question of how the impact of Jesus and its memory altered the early Christians' understanding of the nature of God and how their experience of him and the power of his Spirit became the source of trinitarian thinking. Tillich's discussion is oriented in the structure of life as a symbol applicable, in a transcendent way, to God. But what could it really mean for Jesus as an historically unique person to be "constitutive" for a concept of God? Surely the fact that he did not marry or preached on a mountain or anticipated the coming end of all things cannot be "constitutive" for a concept of God. But the character of his participation in human existence and the nature of his conquest over it must be so "constitutive." For Tillich, this is precisely the case.

What apparently misleads many interpreters of Tillich is the assumption that his thought begins where his system does. Because of the conspicuously ontological setting of the first two parts of his published system, the impression emerges that all of his thought is to be understood from the ontological perspective, that he constricts the deeply suggestive religious symbols to the moulds of ontological terminology. Actually, the reverse is more true. He expands religious experience to an ontological level.

Langdon Gilkey expresses an important insight, though in a curious way, when he claims that Tillich's statement of God as Being-itself is itself symbolic, as Gilkey holds all ontological concepts are. In Gilkey's view, Tillich's terms are an expression of his experience of new being, of renewal as an ontological experience.[45] We have seen why ontological concepts are not symbolic, for then symbols would have no point of reference over against which they could be seen as symbols.[46] But the thrust of what Gilkey is saying holds, that the decisive thing for Tillich personally must have been the manner in which he participated in the New Being. It seems he participated in the power and meaning of Jesus as the Christ in not only a personal or historical but an ontological way. As a consequence, he came to understand the realities of life and history in their ontological setting as well, along with the participation by which they are known.

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[45] L. Gilkey, Maker of Heaven and Earth, Garden City: Doubleday, 1959, pp. 297-8, n. 17

[46] pp. 161-2 above.

CHAPTER VI

PARTICIPATION IN SPIRIT, LIFE AND HISTORY

The concluding parts of Tillich's theological system, on "Life and Spirit" and "History and the Kingdom of God", reinforce the structure of the participation concept which we have seen develop in earlier sections and his earlier writings. New elements or qualities of the relationship are not introduced but those we have observed are given expression in new contexts. The character of participation, as we have come to understand it, has indeed a large role in shaping not only the terminology but the conclusions at which Tillich arrives in these areas of his thought.

The inter-relationship of being and meaning that is constitutive for participation makes of it a particularly appropriate term in the constellation of themes that centers in Spirit. Pannenberg has given an appraisal of this part of Tillich's work:

> Not for a long time in theology has the biblical conception of the Holy Spirit as the source and medium of all life been so clearly expressed in contemporary thought forms and concepts.

The church, which is normally displayed in its particularity as an enclave of received revelation in an alien world, is here presented in a relation to the Spiritual Community in its universal significance for man. From this section of Tillich's thought it is now clear that the New Being implies, in Pannenberg's words, "a universal concept of reality under the sign of the Holy Spirit".[1] If the Christological part is the heart of Tillich's system, the pneumatological describes its life-blood. What makes the participation term so suitable is Tillich's definition of Spirit as "a dimension of life (that) unites the power of being with the meaning of being." (ST III, 111)

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[1] W. Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 230

The architecture of the system as a whole is not complete without these sections. Setting aside the discussion of Reason and Revelation as a kind of prologue, we can then view one main section on being and its power, another on meaning and its power, a third on their unity. But lest the impression is left that the system drives in Hegelian fashion from thesis to antithesis and synthesis, it is to be noted that the work of the Spirit is to unite in the actualities of life and history universally what has been united in unambiguous fashion in the center of the system, the center of history, that is in Jesus as the Christ. The power of the New Being in him continues as the focus of participation.

In surveying the manner in which participation continues as a key concept, we shall need to discuss its operation in the dimension of Spirit, its fundamental role in the church and the Spiritual Community, its function in ethics, its place in history, and its use in describing the relationship with Eternal Life.

1. Participation in the Dimension of Spirit

George H. Tavard condemns in Tillich precisely what Pannenberg commends. In Tavard's view, Tillich reduces the divine persona of the Spirit to the Spiritual Presence.[2] Tillich is not, however, quarreling with the formulations of the patristic period; he is rather saying that they are misunderstood in our own. To describe the Spirit as person is grossly misleading in view of the understanding we have of personality and personhood. In fact, Tillich at several points questions the use of "spirit" itself, with its unfortunate connotations of distinction from body and identification with an ethereal ghostliness. Tillich's effort is to restore the possibility of understanding God as Spirit by renewing the meaning of the term in relation to life.

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[2] G.H. Tavard, Review of ST III in Journal of Religion, v. 46, 1966, p. 225

Tillich's concept of the "multidimensional unity of life" is an expression of his belief that the realms of the inorganic, the organic and the spirit participate in each other. Alongside the element of separation between them is an element of identity, in terms of being and meaning. Life is the actualization of the potential, and can be used to describe the genesis of stars as well as men. The dimension of the organic, he maintains, is "essentially present in the inorganic." (ST III, 20) In the self-actualization of life in all dimensions three functions can be distinguished, of self-integration "under the principle of centeredness," self-creation "under the principle of growth," and self-transcendence "under the principle of sublimity." (ST III, 31-2) While these functions, along with the elements of ontological polarity that ground them, are fully visible only in man, in the dimension of spirit, they are anticipated essentially in the other dimensions. But always, in the self-development of these functions, the ambiguities of life are present. The dimension of spirit as decisively as any of life's dimensions is subject to those ambiguities resulting from the structures of existential estrangement.

Among the ambiguities of life are the personal and moral ones. No self-transcendence is possible without participation; the self cannot transcend itself as a centered self without participating in community. (ST III, 40-1) Community is essential for the dimension of spirit and yet community-oriented conformism can stifle the human spirit. The moral imperative is basically the requirement of participating in the other in order to constitute one's selfhood, which is his moral task. Such participation must be in the center of another self, to "accept his particularities even if there is no convergence between the two individuals as individuals." (ST III, 45) The participation, in other words, must go beyond dependence on characteristics of the other which may be attractive. But then the ambiguity of the moral law asserts itself: "How is participation in the center of the other self related to participation in or rejection of his particular characteristics?" (ST III, 46) Do they support or exclude each other? What are the moral requirements if the "other" is an assassin? Again, Tillich speaks of the ambiguity of "personal participation" which always involves an element of giving oneself and an element of holding oneself back. The emotional participation in romantic love, for example, may be distorted by missing the other's selfhood through preoccupation with one's own involvement. (ST III, 77)

With thoroughgoing consistency in all parts of his system, Tillich insists that there is no self-elevation or self-transformation possible that can break the hold of estrangement from the side of life itself. The initiative is always on the side of the Spirit, the Spiritual Presence, God.

This represents one of the continuous applications of the Protestant principle. Participation in the power that conquers estrangement is never self-initiated; it is always divinely initiated.

Now the question is, how complete is that conquest? How fulfilled is that participation? As we have seen, Tillich's answer is that it is both complete and fragmentary. The conquest is complete in principle but not in actuality. Putting it another way, Tillich speaks of those who are "grasped by the Spiritual Presence":

> Though born anew, men are not yet new beings but have entered a new reality which can make them into new beings. Participating in the New Being does not automatically guarantee that one is new. (ST III, 222)

Tillich's complex expressions about "participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life" (ST III, 133) being nevertheless fragmentary, are meant to convey the fact that a man is still living under the conditions of an ambiguous existence, whether or not he has participated in the New Being. Participation does not imply a spiritual perfectionism. Nevertheless, that participation is real. The ambiguity under which he lives is not the same ambiguity, because he has seen the eternal city, he has known the ambiguity's conquest. Within the framework of Tillich's meanings this could be called a spiritual participation or a symbolic participation, though these words are misleading in their connotations which make their use questionable. He who is born anew is involved in a meaning-bearing participation and his life is transformed.

In view of life's multi-dimensional unity, all dimensions of life, inorganic, organic, spiritual, "as they are effective in man, participate in the Spirit-created ecstasy." (ST III, 118) The dimension of spirit participates directly, the others indirectly, in part because spirit is actualized under biological conditions and in part because the inorganic and organic dimensions find their dynamic elements fulfilled in the dimension of spirit. The basic structure of Tillich's analysis of spirit is participative.

2. Participation in the Spiritual Community and the Church

The Spiritual Community answers "the real question" which we have been raising and which Tillich phrases in this way:

> ...whether, in spite of the existential estrangement of the children of God from God and from each other, participation in a transcendent unity is possible. (ST III, 157)

The Spiritual Community does not suggest an answer: it is the answer, a participation in New Being that is ecstatic, communal and regenerative, to be actualized in personal life and history. It can be called the Community of the New Reality, in the sense that it imparts the New Being and the New Meaning in which it is grounded. The Spiritual Community is holy, participating through faith and love in the holiness of the divine life. (ST III, 155-6) Within it is the source of the power that conquers the ambiguity of self-constitution morally, the source of participation in the transcendent union that makes the moral act possible. (ST III, 159) Further, in the Spiritual Community, the ambiguities of inter-personal relationship, that are implicit in life under the conditions of existence, are overcome. These Tillich identifies as the ambiguities of inclusiveness, which has an exclusive element, of equality, which can only be partially approximated, of leadership, which has demonic possibilities, and of legal form, which attempts to but cannot successfully resolve these ambiguities. (ST III, 205)

Now the paradox of the churches, reflecting the only Christian paradox, Jesus as the Christ, is that they participate in both the ambiguities of life and in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community. (ST III, 165) The Spiritual Community is not some organization alongside of or above the churches. It is within them as the source of the life in which they participate. One cannot enter the Spiritual Community except through the churches. That is not, however, in Tillich's scheme, to make membership in it dependent upon membership in a church or a denomination. Tillich's suggestive theory is that the Spiritual Community may be manifest in a "latent church" apart from the ecclesiastical patterns, as well as the "manifest church." The presence of the Spiritual Community in the church and the essential character of participation in it provide a critical principle for the church as well as a source of creative reform. Any elevation by a manifest church of its structures to the level of the unambiguous, or claim exclusively to embody the Spiritual Community, is rejected as demonization. The mechanization of church structure and ritual is resisted in the drive for new and fuller expressions. (ST III, 244)

The experience of worship is an expression of participation in the Spiritual Community through the manifest church. It involves "the ecstatic acknowledgement of the divine holiness and the infinite distance of Him who at the same time is present in the Spiritual Presence." Worship is which has an exclusive element, of equality, which can only be partially approximated, of leadership, which has demonic possibilities, and of legal form, which attempts to but cannot successfully resolve these ambiguities. (ST III, 205)

Now the paradox of the churches, reflecting the only Christian paradox, Jesus as the Christ, is that they participate in both the ambiguities of life and in the unambiguous life of the Spiritual Community. (ST III, 165) The Spiritual Community is not some organization alongside of or above the churches. It is within them as the source of the life in which they participate. One cannot enter the Spiritual Community except through the churches. That is not, however, in Tillich's scheme, to make membership in it dependent upon membership in a church or a denomination. Tillich's suggestive theory is that the Spiritual Community may be manifest in a "latent church" apart from the ecclesiastical patterns, as well as the "manifest church." The presence of the Spiritual Community in the church and the essential character of participation in it provide a critical principle for the church as well as a source of creative reform. Any elevation by a manifest church of its structures to the level of the unambiguous, or claim exclusively to embody the Spiritual Community, is rejected as demonization. The mechanization of church structure and ritual is resisted in the drive for new and fuller expressions. (ST III, 244)

The experience of worship is an expression of participation in the Spiritual Community through the manifest church. It involves "the ecstatic acknowledgement of the divine holiness and the infinite distance of Him who at the same time is present in the Spiritual Presence." Worship is not "theoretical assertion" but rather "paradoxical participation of the finite and estranged in the infinite to which it belongs." (ST III, 190) In contemplation, a profound element in worship, a "participation in that which transcends the subject-object scheme" is experienced which is "too deep for words," beyond the ambiguities of language. Here Spirit is known by Spirit - the only way possible.

The church's task of actualizing the Spiritual Community gives it an "intensive universality" in seeking "to participate as church in everything created under all dimensions of life." (ST III, 170) In its task, the church fights against all the ambiguities of life in the realms it encounters. The criterion of membership in a church, in Tillich's assessment, is not subjection to a faith nor possession of a "religious experience" but rather the desire to participate in the life of a group based on the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. (ST III, 175) The scope of the evangelism of the church, in Tillich's view - which says something about the "apologetic" nature of his theological system - is to draw men to a transfer from latent to manifest participation in the Spiritual Community. (ST III, 220)

Carl J. Armbruster, for one, believes this to be an inadequate basis for the legitimate claims of the manifest church. He is disturbed by the "sweeping concept of the latent church" that Tillich introduces, wondering if in fact, the "explicit reception of the New Being in Jesus the Christ" really does "add to the manifest church?" He acknowledges that Tillich agrees that the possession of the Bible, the sacraments and an organization to rally and sustain Christians in their efforts to live the Gospel have value but goes on to question whether, in view of the demonization and profanization into which the manifest church falls, it is really worth the price. Armbruster writes: "The impression is that the latent church is dynamic, exciting, productive, and pregnant with hope, while the manifest church is tired, dull, weighed down with ambiguities, and moribund - despite the fact that it has received the New Being in Jesus the Christ." He then completes the thrust: "One is tempted to conclude almost blasphemously - because it has received the New Being in Jesus the Christ."[3]

It is perhaps natural for those who are particularly sensitive to the positive meanings and values of the manifest church to feel that Tillich has overdrawn his case. But nowhere does he imply that the latent church contains the full potentialities of participation that are open to the manifest church. The latent church often exercises a prophetic witness on behalf of the Spiritual Community, when the manifest church is silent. The latent church often provides healing acceptance when the manifest church is destructively exclusive. All of this Tillich contends and it is incontestable. But the churches in manifestation are "embodiments of the New Being and creations of the Spiritual Presence." (ST III, 168) In the manifest church, participation can reach an intensity of conscious awareness that the latent church can only anticipate.

3. The Ethics of Participation

In the setting of the fourth part of his system, it becomes even clearer that Tillich's ethical theory is an ethic of participation.[4]

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[3] C.J. Armbruster, op. cit., pp. 235-6, his underscoring

[4] cf. p. 229 above.

Morality is not a matter of pure self-determination, but its ambiguities are overcome only in the Spiritual Presence. Nor is faith separate from works of love; rather, both are aspects of participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.

The saintliness of which Tillich speaks is founded on grace. To be sure, he insists on a kind of asceticism, a discipline which is necessitated by the fact of a telos of humanity. But it is not an asceticism of a "spirituality" higher than the materially conditioned reality of the world. Such is a false saintliness that withdraws from the task of the actualization of the New Reality. The asceticism Tillich calls for is one that conquers "a subjective self-affirmation which prevents participation in the object." (ST III, 211) It is an asceticism of openness, to persons and things, that is made possible only in that power which transcends the subject-object split, the power of the Spiritual Presence. The Spiritual Presence as grace makes the self-determination of moral action possible, and as "creator of participation" makes other-determination possible. (ST III, 212)

The grounding of the power to overcome moral and ascetic ambiguities in the Spiritual Presence reveals the central place of faith in Tillich's ethical theory. Faith has the elements of 1) being opened up by the Spiritual Presence; 2) accepting it in spite of the infinite distance between the human spirit and the divine; and 3) expecting final participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. (ST III, 133) Faith is characterized not by an obedience that submits to formulas or beliefs but by an obedience in participation inwardly related to that to which it is true. (ST, III, 132) Faith is the state of being "grasped" by that toward which self-transcendence aspires,"the ultimate in being and meaning." (ST III, 130) The term "self-transcendence" indicates again that faith has something essential to do with man's ethical endeavor. Faith is the manner in which the New Being is received. The consequences of participation in that New Being are the experience of the New Being as creating (regeneration), as paradox (justification), and as process (sanctification.) (ST III, 221) Participation makes ethical achievement possible.

Faith is inseparable from love, the material principle of Tillich's ethic. They represent the two sides of ecstatic participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life. (ST III, 135) "He who is in the state of agape is drawn into this unity." Love includes an element of knowledge, though not of analysis or calculation but rather a participative knowledge that changes the knower and the known. And it contains an emotional element, "the participation of the centered whole of a being in the process of reunion." (ST III, 136-7) Further, it contains a volitional element, the will to unite, to overcome existential separation.

At this point John Macquarrie expresses his dissatisfaction. While he concedes that Tillich may be right in his analysis which seeks to overcome the sharp distinctions between eros as the desire for union with an object, and agape, Macquarrie holds that:

> even so there is a kind of disinterested love (call it agape or anything else) which seems to be the highest love and which, as "disinterested" aims at letting the

> beloved stand by himself just as much as it aims at any reunion (or union).[5]

In many situations, Macquarrie points out, love must sacrifice its urge toward union to allow the beloved the freedom of his being.

If this side of love is disallowed by a participation ethic, then Macquarrie is certainly justified in his dissatisfaction. But we have seen all along that participation as a relationship contains the elements of separation and identity. Further, we have observed that in participation in the power of the New Reality, neither the centeredness of Jesus as the Christ nor the centeredness of the believer is obliterated. Centeredness is fulfilled in this relationship. This enables Tillich to call for a union or reunion that does not destroy either participant. We might well consider his statement of the moral imperative again:

> The moral imperative demands that one self participate in the center of the other self and consequently accept his particularities even if there is no convergence between the two individuals as individuals. This acceptance of the other self by participating in his personal center is the core of love in the sense of _agape_... (ST III, 45)

The ethic of participation does not smother - except when distorted under the conditions of estranged existence.

4. Participation in History

Participation in the transcendent unity of unambiguous life does not take place in a vacuum but in history. The historical dimension is part of the actuality in which the New Being is to be realized.

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[5] J. Macquarrie, "Discussion: _Tillich's Systematic Theology III_" in _Union Seminary Quarterly Review_, v. 19, 1963-4, p. 348

In view of the multi-dimensional unity of life, Tillich discusses the dynamics of history in nature as well as in human existence. The participation of stages of growth in each other in biological life is historical. (ST III, 316) "Nature participates in history." (ST III, 320) Nevertheless, the dynamics of history come to full actualization in man, in whom the new becomes possible, for in participation in the dimension of spirit, causality can become creative and not simple conditioning. (ST III,323)

The ambiguities which Tillich discloses in their operation in personal life are also to be observed in the historical setting: the ambiguities of self-integration, self-creation, and self-transcendence can be sketched out in their implications in nations, empires and historical groups. From these ambiguities some seek escape. The answer to them is not their avoidance but their conquest in the power of the New Being or New Reality which is symbolized in the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God has a double character, reflecting the Christian paradox and the paradox of the churches, in that it has inner-historical and transhistorical sides. "As inner-historical, it participates in the dynamics of history; as transhistorical, it answers the questions implied in the ambiguities of the dynamics of history." (ST III, 357) The symbol of the Kingdom includes life in all realms, meaning that "everything that is participates in the striving toward the inner aim of history: fulfillment or ultimate sublimation." (ST III, 350) The characteristics of the Kingdom of God are therefore all-embracing: political, social, personalistic and universal. All persons who contribute to its movement participate in it. (ST III, 391)

The task of the church in history is to be the representative of the Kingdom of God. In this way, it has a universal mission. It is no victory of the Kingdom to attempt to take oneself out of history in the name of the transcendent Kingdom. That only separates one from the historical group and its creative self-realization. "One cannot reach the transcendent Kingdom of God without participating in the struggle of the inner-historical Kingdom of God" to overcome the ambiguities of historical existence. (ST III, 392) In the kind of historical sacrifice that fulfills rather than annihilates the individual, a victory of the Kingdom of God has occurred, a participation in the Kingdom as the End of History is experienced.

Wolfhart Pannenberg, who endeavors to think through the implications of the assertion that history is the horizon of reality, has criticized the ontological underpinnings of Tillich's view. "An ontology for which history is only one theme among others and does not determine the structure for the basic ontological statements themselves," he writes, "cannot give to a single historical event any absolutely decisive significance."[6] The problem Pannenberg uncovers, however, is a problem for any view, including his own, which seeks to go beyond the most primitive historical relativism. Meaningful history must have points of reference that transcend it ontologically. As soon as an event is given "absolutely decisive significance" it is no longer merely an historical event along with others. As soon as history is seen to have some kind of end, or aim, or center, it is no longer merely history. ~~Either~~ Both the event ~~or~~ and the direction express an ontological ground of history. Pannenberg's own view is that we can "participate proleptically" in the final realities, such as peace, spirit, love, life in a broken, partial way, a view of participation very close to Tillich's.[7] The differences are that Pannenberg does not see the ontological basis of his own position, while Tillich emphasizes the ontological structure and, further, Pannenberg finds in the "historical" event of the resurrection of Jesus a full participation in the reality of eschatological life while Tillich believes the center of history is in the appearance of the power of the New Being in the picture of Jesus as the Christ, with its factual-historical foundation. Tillich's view does not give any concrete historical event "absolutely decisive significance" but it does give that kind of significance to historical actualization at a point in the past which discloses the aim of the future. Participation in the power that conquers history must take place within it.

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[6] W. Pannenberg, op. cit., p. 231

5. Participation in Eternal Life

As Tillich draws his system to a close, he is aware of the highly symbolic nature of the language that he uses, and the language theology has always used in speaking of the last things. History has an end, in the double meaning of aim and conclusion: the end of the transcendent Kingdom of God or Eternal Life.

At this point in the system, the entire pattern of life becomes clear. It is a pattern, or more accurately, a Gestalt, of dynamic movement with four moments. It begins with the moment of dreaming innocence, which is lost in the transition to the moment of existence with its ambiguities. Into the midst of existence enters the central moment of the New Being with its meaning and reality. Its goal is the fourth moment, of essentialization. That is not to say that the movement is simply a return to an original state, as in Origen's scheme. For Tillich, "participation in the eternal life depends on a creative synthesis of a being's essential nature with what it has made of it in its temporal existence." (ST III, 401) Life and history have a positive contribution to make toward the end of life and history. Essentialization involves the fulfillment of those positive contributions and the negation of life's negativities. "The Divine Life is the eternal conquest of the negative; this is its blessedness." (ST III, 405)

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[7] W. Pannenberg, et.al., Theology as History, J. Robinson and J. Cobb (eds.), New York: Harper and Row, 1967, p. 263

In the final conquest of the ambiguities of life and history, the polarities, in their various elements, are in balance. The individualization-participation tension is resolved in the actualization of both. The essentialization of the individual is in participation in the essence of all individuals. (ST III, 409)

The symbolic phrase, "resurrection of the body", expresses "man's participation in eternal life beyond death." (ST III, 412) This symbolization negates the "nakedness" of merely spiritual existence, incorporating all of the dimensions of being. It affirms a positive valuation of life and history. To the question of whether this involves the presence of a self-conscious self in Eternal Life, Tillich believes the only answer can be two negative statements. On the one hand, there can be no participation "if there are no individual centers to participate." Tillich carries through the logic of participation: the centered, self-conscious self "cannot be excluded from Eternal Life." On the other hand, "as the participation of bodily being in Eternal Life is not the endless continuation of a constellation of old or new physical particles, so the participation of the centered self is not the endless continuation of a particular stream of consciousness in memory and anticipation." Such would require the projection of temporality and spatiality into Eternal Life. The logic of participation here leads to ecstatic transcendence. The self-conscious center is not in Eternal Life what it is in temporal existence.

The last word of Tillich's system is that Eternal Life is life in the eternal, that is to say, life in God. (ST III, 420-1) An "eschatological pan-en-theism" is his theological terminology for the Pauline vision of the end when "God may be everything to every one" or "all in all." (I Cor. 15:28) We have seen that Tillich holds that life in the whole of creation and in a special way in human history contributes "in every moment of time to the Kingdom of God and its eternal life," that "since eternal life is participation in the divine life, every finite happening is significant for God." (ST III, 398) The entire creative, historical process has meaning in and for God.

Clark M. Williamson asks how this assertion that the world process means something for God can be consistent with Tillich's earlier statement that "there is nothing which the created world can offer God. He is the only one who gives." (ST I, 264)[8] Part of the apparent contradiction is resolved when it is noted that Williamson has quoted out of context. The paragraph in question is an historical survey. The sentence actually begins: "Yet, according to Lutheran theology, there is nothing which the created world can offer God." Tillich does not always accept the dictums of Lutheran theology as unqualifiedly his own.

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[8] C.M. Williamson, Review of ST III, Journal of Religion, v.46, 1966, p. 303

Nevertheless, Williamson raises an important issue for Tillich. God does have aseity. He is not dependent on anything the created world can do for him. His being can be neither diminished nor enlarged by the works of creatures. Tillich is not saying, in his "eschatological pan-en-theism" anything to contradict that. For what he is affirming is that the work of creatures has meaning for God. That is not to say that the creature can alter the meaning of creation and history for the Eternal, but he does participate in its actualization. Positive aspects of the actualities that result from the participation of creatures in the power of the New Being, concrete expressions of the New Meaning are taken up and fulfilled in the Divine Life.

Carl Armbruster perceives the fact that in the last analysis, Tillich's is not a closed but an open system. He is disturbed by the absence of more specific answers to the question of how God and man are reunited by essentialization in Eternal Life. He writes:

> The Tillichian system is a symmetrical, carefully constructed arch, and it is precisely at this point that we expect to see inserted into place the keystone which is universal essentialization. But the arch is not joined, and so we are never quite sure that the missing keystone really does fit.[9]

But the Protestant principle must resist every effort to close in the arch.

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[9] C.J. Armbruster, op. cit., p. 272

On Tillich's principles, the Divine Life, human freedom and the meaning of history militate against a closed theological system. Perhaps the difficulty is with the metaphor. Armbruster seems to want theology to build a cathedral. Tillich offers something else.

We might better think of Tillich's system and his view of participation in the Divine Life as like a mosaic, in whose creation all have a share. No blueprint is given in advance; there is no kit in which pieces are marked to match the numbers. Rather, each has creative freedom in the Spirit for the actualization of his share, based on a vision of the picture of Jesus as the Christ who discloses the theme of the mosaic, and accomplished in participation in the power of the New Reality in him. The wonder of it is that out of the brokenness of our efforts, from the fragments that seem to be all we can contribute, a work of meaning and beauty is being created.

If the metaphor of an arch can be applied to Tillich's system, it must be used in the sense of a gateway, like Tennyson's in his participation passage:

> I am a part of all that I have met;
> Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
> Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever when I move.[10]

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[10] Alfred Tennyson, Ulysses

EPILOGUE

THE MEANING OF BEING

The results of our investigation of the participation concept in the mosaic of Paul Tillich's thought can now be drawn together. We have discovered the meaning of a term, its core, consistent in spite of its diverse settings and its many implications that have all the complexity of a major conceptual symbol. It is definable. To participate means to share deeply the meaning of another's being and hence to share its power. When that meaning is meaninglessness and the power is weakness, to participate is to bring meaning and power; when the meaning is meaningful and the power is real, to participate is to receive meaning and power.

Participation contains an element of separation that protects personal centers from destruction by submergence, and an element of identity that prevents their self-destruction in isolation. It is dialectical in structure and dynamic in character. The relationship is not bound by the categories of causality and substance but includes their significance transcendently. It is ecstatic, communal and regenerative, driving toward fulfillment in the actualities of personal life and history. In this way, participation has a role in the process of essentialization and is constitutive of Life Eternal, that is, the Divine Life.

The character of participation is established in the participation of God, in his unity with Jesus as the Christ, in the conditions of estranged existence and the participation in turn in that participation by those who have been grasped in faith and love by the power of the New Being in him, as their Ultimate Concern.

In establishing the meaning of participation in Tillich's thought, we have come to observe it as a central conceptual symbol in his system. We have found it in all the constellations, ontological, cognitive, symbolic, Christological, Spirit-centered, historical and eschatological. The term appears continually in Tillich's writings of the 1950's and 1960's. However interesting this might be, is it relevant? Could not the same be said for a term such as "Life" or Logos?

Whatever may be the possibilities in the pursuit of other terms t[illegible]gh Tillich's theological system, the relevance of this one is basic and at least four-fold. Participation is, in contemporary theological language, an unusual term, which makes the fact that it is too generally ignored by interpreters of Tillich more surprising, particularly when ~~his~~ its use is so widespread. In a special way, participation is a typical term for Tillich, because it suggests the ontological, existential and biblical strands in the "fabric" of his theology. Further, we have seen this term open up for us some of the fundamental principles in Tillich's system, such as the axiological principles of being and meaning and the polar elements of separation and identity. Our analysis of participation, additionally, has underscored not only the dynamic-relational quality of this term but the dynamic-relational quality of the theology in which it is used so widely.

The manner in which our study has indicated again the particular traditions of thought that have had greatest significance for Tillich has been of historical interest. In an "afterword" that is part of the volume of essays, Paul Tillich and Catholic Thought, Tillich responds to George

McLean who had referred to participation:

> He declares that this concept, which is much used by me, is not Protestant. He is right with respect to the main stream of Protestant thought. But since there is no religion which could exist without the experience of Spiritual Presence, Protestantism also has a strong line of thought in which the reality of participation is expressed, from the mystical elements of the early Luther on, to the doctrine of unio mystica in Protestant Orthodoxy, to Pietism, Schleiermacher, Rudolf Otto and the liturgical reform movements. In these cases "Catholic substance" reappeared under the control of the "Protestant principle."[1]

Adams calls the decisive tradition for Tillich the "subterranean stream" of Western thought, but we have seen as well the determinative influences of the classical traditions of Greek philosophy and Christian theology.

It has become clear, however, that Tillich does not receive and use the materials of the traditions in which he stands unreflectively. He changes the entire direction in which participation points. Not only does man participate in the Divine Life but the Divine Life participates in humanity; in fact, the latter is the paradigmatic participation. This reversal, along with Tillich's evaluation of the concept in its more normal setting as transcending the categories of causality and substance, reveals that in Tillich's system a profound distinction and significant relationship between the being of being, that is, the power of being, and the meaning of being are recognized. Tillich writes that "the universe of meaning is the fulfillment of the potentialities of the universe of being." (ST III, 84) Meaning stands in relationship to being as God does to Being-itself. In the New Being meaning and being are united, and the power of meaning imparted. Participation is the means of the relationship of being and meaning. The axiological principles in Tillich's system are profoundly relevant to all thought, for as soon as the question of the meaning of being is raised, it must be answered.

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[1] Paul Tillich, "An Afterword: Appreciation and Reply" in O'Meara and Weisser (eds.), op. cit., p. 303

Another interesting aspect of the participation concept an investigation unveils is its quality as a bridge-term between philosophy and theology. As such, it is again typical of Tillich's thinking. Tillich is conscious of standing "on the boundary" between these two disciplines of the mind. The determining influences that shape the meaning of this term for him reveal how the two sides have significance for each other across that boundary. In this case at least, a philosophical term with origins in the Greek tradition received a special coloration, in fact, a decisive new significance, in the Christological setting. Its meaning was deepened but its value for philosophical discourse was not lost.

The central place of Tillich's symbol theory and its integral role in his entire scheme of thought have been emphasized by our study. There is nothing peripheral about that theory: its basic ontological structure and cognitive principles are of a piece with all of Tillich's main principles and structures. The crucial role participation plays in that theory underscores its crucial role in the entire system.

Aside from its significance in pointing to the fundamental axiological principles in Tillich's system and all thinking, the participation concept, as we have observed, has a special value in its historical setting. Participation can indicate a real though incomplete relationship with and involvement in the New Reality. It can carry the connotation of the unambiguous, in that the relationship is not with a questionable power or partial meaning. And yet it can convey, through its element of separation, the fact that realization in personal life and history is fragmentary and that participations are partial. This dual emphasis is necessary for any realistic or valuable soteriology.

Our investigation has shed some unanticipated light on a question not really basic for it: to whom is Tillich's systematic theology addressed? Tillich refers to his theology as apologetic, with its challenge directed to those outside the Christian theological circle. The methodology of correlation of question and answer is surely apologetic in nature. Yet Tom Driver holds Tillich's work to be directed to the church.[2] Perhaps we can agree with both. Tillich appears to be addressing those who participate, however distantly, in the heritage of the New Being, who may believe themselves to be in no church at all but who actually comprise the latent church. His challenge is for them to see all that is involved and can be realized in their participation.

If these are the people addressed, what is the message? In an essential way, message and medium are conjoined in participation. For the answer to the question, what does it mean to be? is basically: to be means to participate. Participation is the means by which being is fulfilled in meaning. Participation does not merely convey the answer; it is the answer. Paul Tillich's is a philosophical theology of participation.

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[2] Tom Driver, op. cit., p. 32

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